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THE LAST THINGS

BY

JOSEPH AGAR BEET, D.D.

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1898

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EMMANUEL

STOR

"Be of good cheer about death, and know as true this one thing: that to a good man, whether living or dead, no evil can happen; and that he and his are not overlooked by the gods. Neither has this that has happened to me come by chance. But this is clear to me, that to die now and to be released was better for me."—SOCRATES BEFORE HIS JUDGES.

"Christ Jesus, who has brought to nought death and brought to light life and incorruption by means of the Gospel."—THE APOSTLE PAUL.

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

SOME of my readers having in some measure misunderstood the aim and meaning of Part III. of previous editions of this volume, I now give, in order to place these beyond doubt, the following further explanation.

The aim of the whole book is to reproduce the teaching of the Bible about the great events which will close the present order of things and about the new order which will follow. This I have done for the future punishment of sin on pp. 103—193. At the close of this exposition I have recapitulated as follows: "To sum up. The writers of the New Testament agree to describe, with more or less definiteness, the punishment to be inflicted in the day of Christ's return as actual suffering and as final exclusion from the blessedness of the saved. They give no ground for hope that the agony of the lost will ever cease: but they do not plainly and categorically assert its endless continuance."

Then follow two lectures discussing certain theories

which, as I think, go beyond or contradict this judgment. These theories, I have endeavoured to state fairly; and have adduced in support of each of them such arguments as seemed to me most forceful. But I have discussed them only so far as they bear on the matter in hand. As a result of this examination, I am compelled to reject all these theories as destitute of sufficient evidence in the Bible or elsewhere, and as therefore lying outside practical Theology. Consequently, when, at the close of this examination of the theories, I sum up and finally restate the results of my investigation, I do so in words absolutely equivalent to those used at the close of my exposition of the teaching of the Bible. In other words, my judgment derived from this source is not in any way influenced by the theories passed in review.

This final summing up, on p. 226, containing my last words on the solemn subject before us, is as follows: "Of this acute suffering of the lost, the writers of the New Testament see no end; nor do they teach anything which logically implies, or even suggests, that it will ever end. On the other hand, they do not go so far as expressly and indisputably to assert the endless permanence of these ruined and wretched ones, and the consequent endlessness of their torment. The curtain is raised for a moment, revealing the anguish of the lost; and then falls, hiding them from our view." To this judgment, I add nothing.

Of the theories mentioned above, the first which came under our notice was that commonly known as "the immortality of the soul."

The word *immortality* is sometimes used in the Apocrypha and in the New Testament to describe the righteous man's hope beyond death. In the Book of Wisdom iii. 1-4 we read, "Righteous men's souls are in God's hand; and torment shall not touch them. They seemed, in the eyes of the foolish, to be dead: and their departure was reckoned an injury, and their going forth from us a calamity. But they are in peace. For if in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality." The equivalent term *incorruption* describes (in R.V. of Rom. ii. 7) the aim of perseverance in well doing, this last being followed by *eternal life*. The words *incorruption* and *immortality* are found together in 1 Cor. xv. 52ff: "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must needs put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. But when this corruptible have put on incorruption, and this mortal have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." These last words define incorruption and immortality to denote a blessed existence beyond the grave.

That this survival of death will, to the righteous, be followed by endless blessedness, I have on p. 150 and pp. 236f proved, apart from the meaning of the

word *eternal*, by sure inference from plain and repeated teaching of the New Testament. It is a distinctive message of Christ, who, as we read in 2 Tim. i. 10, "brought to light life and immortality through the Gospel."

This immortality, the whole man, body and soul, will inherit, in virtue of his relation to Christ. So Rom. viii. 11: "He that raised Christ Jesus from the dead will make alive also your mortal bodies." But inasmuch as in the soul the personality of man specifically resides and the soul goes at death into the nearer presence of Christ, while the body decays in the grave, it is not inappropriate to speak of the soul, in contrast to the body, as immortal: for it is not extinguished, as the body is decomposed, by the stroke of death. And this is a common meaning of the phrase "immortality of the soul."

In a still further sense does immortality pertain to man, and especially to the soul of man. In Wisdom ii. 23 we read: "God created man for *incorruption*, and made him an image of His own proper being." God designed man, not merely to survive death, but to share His own endless being and blessedness. And this Divine purpose, we cannot doubt, shaped the very structure, if we may so say, of man's intellectual and moral nature. He was planned by the Creator for endless and glorious being, to be a created counterpart of the immortality of God. The realisation of this destiny was conditioned on

obedience. And the clear teaching of the Bible leaves no room to doubt that in some men this Divine purpose will never be accomplished. But in his deepest and final fall man is a ruin of immortality, a ruin the more awful because of the grandeur of his original destiny. In other words, whatever man may do, his immortal destiny moulds his future lot.

It is worthy of note that in the Bible the endless blessedness awaiting the righteous and the punishment of the lost are never in any way connected with any essential permanence of the human soul. The one rests securely on the "promise of life in Christ Jesus:" the other rests on the word of Him who will be the righteous Judge of all men.

In the literature of the ancient world we find many intimations that the soul of man will survive death. The noblest of these are in the writings of Plato: see my quotations on pp. 194f. He teaches, not only that the soul will survive death, but that beyond the grave exact retribution awaits all men for all actions done on earth. See on p. 33 of my *Through Christ to God.* He felt that human life and action are too vast in their nature and results to be limited by the short span of bodily life; and looked for their real issues in a more enduring world unseen. This teaching, used by Plato as an encouragement to virtue and a dissuasive from vice, was a wonderful anticipation of the fuller and authoritative teaching of Christ. It is the richest

product, in the literature of the world, of Natural Theology.

Along with the above, were other elements. In the absence of a supernatural revelation, Plato sought in the immaterial nature of the soul for proof of its endless permanence. And, with logical consistency, he found in the same a proof not only of its endless permanence in the future but of its existence in the past without beginning. So on p. 246 of his *Phædrus* he sums up his argument by saying, "If the soul be truly affirmed to be self-moving, then must she also be without beginning, and immortal. Enough of the soul's immortality."

This teaching of Plato was expounded by Cicero in the Latin language spoken throughout the Western half of the Roman empire. With him the phrase "immortality of souls" denotes the endless permanence of all human souls.

We need not wonder that Tertullian, Augustine, and other Christian writers recognised, and eagerly appealed to in support of Christian doctrine, these important elements of truth in the teaching of Plato. On the other hand, they rejected, as plainly contradicted in the Bible, Plato's theory of the pre-existence of souls. They accepted Cicero's phrase "immortality of souls;" though not found, or any equivalent of it, in the Bible. And, like Plato, they sought support for the all-important doctrine of retribution beyond the grave, in the nature

of the soul. In other words, they called to their aid, in defence of the teaching of Christ, Greek metaphysics. Such defence is legitimate, but dangerous. In this case, it somewhat obscured the teaching of Christ and His Apostles ; and gave rise to a doctrine, the essential and endless permanence of the human soul, not taught in the Bible and not resting on any sure foundation.

The chief argument urged for this doctrine is that, since the soul survives the shock of death which destroys the body, we may assume, in the absence of any indication to the contrary, its endless permanence. But this ancient argument seems to me, in our ignorance of the nature of the soul and of the world into which the soul goes at death, very small proof or presumption that in all cases it will abide for ever, even when God's purpose of mercy has been utterly and finally frustrated by man's sin and when existence has become an unmixed evil. Certainly this slight presumption is a most unsafe foundation on which to build a doctrine which modifies so seriously the teaching which in this volume we have derived from the Bible.

It is worthy of note that all the early Christian writers who assert the immortality of the soul were familiar with the writings of Plato. The earliest of these, Athenagoras, an Athenian, was a philosopher before he became a Christian. In his work on *The Resurrection of the Dead*, he several times writes of

the soul as immortal. So does Tertullian still more frequently and explicitly, in his works on *The Soul* and on *The Resurrection of the Flesh*, in terms identical with those of Plato; and quotes Plato as holding this doctrine. In ch. iii. of this latter work we read: "Some things are known by nature, such as the immortality of the soul with most men, such as our God, with all men. I will therefore use the opinion of a Plato when asserting 'every soul is immortal.'" Origen, who was also familiar with Plato, uses similar language: e.g. *First Principles* bk. iii. 13. Augustine, I have on p. 199 already quoted. I notice also that the above writers do not appeal, in proof of the immortality of the soul, to the Bible. They always support it by arguments similar to those of Plato. It is impossible, while reading their writings and comparing them with Christian writings of an earlier day, even with those of Justin and Irenæus, to doubt that to him were due both phrase and matter of their teaching on this subject.

On the doctrine of the endless permanence of the soul, as a metaphysical speculation, I pronounce no judgment. In this book I have referred to it merely to assert that it is not taught in the Bible, and that its basis is too questionable to allow its introduction as a factor in the matter before us.

The theory of universal salvation, we found to be contradicted, directly or indirectly, by several plain assertions of Holy Scripture. On the other hand, a

few passages seemed to favour it. But this apparent support vanished under further examination. Certain other arguments based on the nature of God had our attention. But we found them altogether insufficient even to cast doubt on the emphatic teaching of the Bible that some will be finally shut out from the glorious kingdom of God.

For the theory of probation after death, we found no support in the Bible, and no reliable evidence elsewhere. Moreover we saw that, even if proved, it would leave untouched the most serious difficulties which surround the solemn subject before us. It is therefore, even as a speculation, of little value.

The theory of the endless suffering of the lost claims respect as being the belief of almost the entire Church of Christ during long centuries. Certain passages which seemed to contradict it had our attention. Of these, the most weighty are those which compare the punishment of sinners to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. To these may be added a few others which seem to suggest that evil will ultimately vanish from the universe of God. But under examination this contrary evidence lost its force. Throughout the Bible we could find no steady ray of hope, even of mitigation of suffering, for those condemned on the great day.

On the other hand, we could not find decisive teaching of Holy Scripture sufficient to warrant confident assertion of the endless suffering of the lost. It is true

that the Bible depicts the lost as in actual and intense suffering, and gives no word of hope that this suffering will ever cease. But this does not necessarily imply its endless continuance. The only passages which could in any way be so interpreted were five, viz. Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41, 46 (cp. *v.* 30), Mark ix. 43-48, Rev. xiv. 9-11. And, as we saw, not one of these, nor all taken together, can be appealed to as decisive. Moreover against them must be set the passages, indecisive though we found them to be, which seem at first sight to teach or suggest the extinction of the lost or the ultimate extinction of evil. This apparent contradiction warns us not to build important doctrine on a few passages of Holy Scripture. This has often been a source of error. This caution is specially needful when the passages in question are highly figurative. A theory involving issues so tremendous ought not to be asserted, and certainly has no moral force, unless supported by abundant and indisputable evidence. Such evidence, we have not been able to find.

This lack of support becomes conspicuous when contrasted with the evidence on which rest the great primary doctrines of the Gospel, viz. the divinity of Christ, justification through faith and through the death of Christ, the new life in faith and in the Spirit of God. All these are clearly asserted, and as clearly implied, again and again by the various writers of the New Testament. We cannot contradict them without

charging the Apostles and Evangelists with seriously misrepresenting the teaching of their Master. Even the doctrine of the Trinity, which is not taught in the Bible in the form in which it is stated in the Nicene Creed or in modern theological works, is nevertheless only a convenient expression of necessary inferences from abundant teaching of the New Testament about the superhuman dignity of Christ and the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. To contradict it, therefore, involves inevitably a contradiction of teaching traced by abundant documentary evidence to the Apostles and to Christ. For the theory before us, no evidence can be found comparable in weight and conclusiveness to that which supports the great doctrines just referred to. Yet, without such decisive evidence, no doctrine of future punishment can have moral force.

This theory, thus insufficiently attested, we found to lie open to serious objections. To these objections, however, we could not give decisive weight; except as reasons for re-examination of the teaching of the Bible. For sin and its consequences are to us insoluble mysteries. Moreover, even so far as they are known to us, the consequences of sin are often tremendous beyond all human estimate of its demerit. To its unknown future consequences, we have no right to affix any limits whatever. The profound difficulty of the whole subject warns us not to speculate about it; and warns us, as our only safe guide, to keep well within

the limits of the decisive teaching of Holy Scripture. This has been my guiding principle in this volume.

Another alternative theory is that the lost will ultimately sink into unconsciousness. This theory avoids some of the difficulties which surround that which we have just considered. Moreover it has a certain completeness which is not a little attractive; and is in harmony with prevalent scientific conceptions. It has never, till recent years, been popular. But its advocates claim that it is frequently and clearly taught in the Bible. This biblical evidence, we carefully examined. And, under examination, it failed altogether and completely. The evidence most worthy of consideration is the not unfrequent metaphor of the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. But we remembered that metaphor is a most uncertain foundation for positive teaching. And for this metaphor we found another explanation fully satisfactory and independent of the theory before us. Even the compactness of this theory and the relief it affords from serious difficulty may become a snare. For, in the history of the Church, theological and ecclesiastical errors, as I believe them to be, have sometimes gained prevalence because similar recommendations concealed the fact that they were destitute of any reliable foundation.

The theories of the extinction of the lost, of probation beyond the grave, and of universal salvation are simply vain human attempts to solve a mystery which

God has not thought fit to reveal. The terrible delineations of punishment given in the New Testament are sufficient to fill us with wholesome fear of sin and its consequences. But they are not sufficient to teach us exactly what the fate of the lost will be. On the other hand, the solemnity of the subject and the insoluble difficulties with which it is surrounded forbid us to venture, in our description of the fate of the lost, a hair's breadth beyond the plain and indisputable teaching of the Bible.

In describing the above theories, and endeavouring to reproduce the evidence in their favour, it is difficult to avoid giving an impression of favour towards one or other. If I have done so, it is unintentional. All these theories, I reject as without solid foundation.

The foregoing pages indicate clearly my relation to the various forms of teaching now prevalent about the future punishment of sin. My teaching is directly contradicted by the theory of universal restoration. It is not contradicted by the theories of the endless suffering, or the ultimate extinction, of the lost. All that I teach, the advocates of these theories teach also. But they go beyond my teaching, in opposite directions; and, as I think, go beyond the indisputable teaching of Holy Scripture. The only way to controvert my position is to prove that the Bible contains solid ground on which, in one or other of these directions, we can go safely further than I have gone.

It is worthy of note that, whereas until recent years preachers and writers did not hesitate to speak of and describe the actual torment of the lost, few do so now. Indeed the excess of past days is producing an excessive recoil. For I observe with regret that the future punishment of sin, so conspicuous in the New Testament, is losing its due place in the modern pulpit. To reinstate it, is one purpose of this volume.

Objection has been taken to several references in the earlier editions of this work to the moral sense of men as a voice of God in man and as the supreme rule of human thought and action. These casual references must be read in the light of the fuller exposition of this important subject in Sect. II. of my Fernley Lecture on *The Credentials of the Gospel*, in Lectures III. and VII. of my *Through Christ to God*, and in Lectures VI. and XX. of my *New Life in Christ*. Against this teaching, so far as I know, no protest has been made. Indeed it is but a re-echo of teaching accepted by nearly all Christian writers.

Of these, the best known is Butler in the second of his famous sermons on *Human Nature*, where we read: "There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil,

wrong, unjust, which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly. . . . It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself; but this faculty, I say, not to be considered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others; but considered as a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so."

What I have written, in this volume and elsewhere, by no means implies that the authority of the moral sense is superior to that of the Bible. These cannot be compared. Each is supreme in its own sphere: and each recognises the authority of the other. Every one is bound to obey, until better instructed, the voice of conscience. But that in us which is noblest and best pays lowly homage to Christ. Moreover, the voice of Christ both strengthens the authority of the voice within and gives us power to obey it. Indeed, in His followers, the two voices are blended. We cannot distinguish practically between the voice of conscience and that which speaks to us from the Cross and the Throne.

To the moral sense even of the heathen the Apostles appealed. So 2 Cor. iv. 2: "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

For these reasons, the moral sense claims a hearing

in theology and especially in the solemn matter now before us. It is not superseded by, any more than it can override, the authority of Christ speaking to us from the pages of the New Testament. Sometimes these authorities have seemed to be in conflict. To devout students, such apparent conflict is both painful and perplexing. In this volume, by listening to each voice, we have sought for the harmony which underlies whatever is true.

To guard against the misunderstanding referred to above, I have in part rewritten pages 206-211, and have altered some other passages. I have also added a note (F) on Gladstone's chapters on the Future Life in his *Studies subsidiary to the Works of Butler*. Otherwise this edition is a reprint of the earlier ones.

RICHMOND,
7th March, 1898.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS volume embodies the careful research and thought of thirty years. During the whole of that time the topics of which it treats have been matters of keen controversy between sincere and earnest servants of Christ and frequently between members of the same Church. The volume is therefore to a large extent polemic. But everywhere I have made controversy subordinate to positive teaching. And my aim throughout has been to reproduce the teaching of the Bible.

Two chief subjects are here discussed: the Second Coming of Christ, and the Future Punishment of Sin.

Of these topics, the former has been discredited by attempts to read into the unfulfilled prophecies of Holy Scripture predictions of modern history. Undeterred by the failures of earlier interpreters, successive writers have attempted to delineate the course of events in the future; pushing the dates further and further forward as earlier anticipations have been disproved. The failure and manifest folly of these

attempts have led many thoughtful people to turn away from the whole subject of unfulfilled prophecy as having no bearing on the practical life of to-day. Even the plainly foretold return of Christ to judge the world, which occupies so large a place in the New Testament, has been in great measure overlooked. To others, this oversight has given to the subject undue importance.

The practical use of the future punishment of sin as a means of moral suasion has made it in all ages a favourite topic in the pulpit. And popular preachers have used a free hand in delineating the sufferings of the lost. But, in modern times a quickened moral sense has revolted against the heartless and awful pictures in which some preachers have indulged. The analogy of righteous human government has taught them that divine punishment must be in harmony with the proportion and fitness of things. This revolt against the rhetoric of the pulpit has demanded and compelled a reconsideration of the whole subject.

This reconsideration has suggested, in opposition to the popular theory of the endless torment of the lost, other milder theories of the future punishment of sin. And the advocates of these theories have claimed for them, with more or less confidence, the authority of the New Testament.

In this volume I have endeavoured to reproduce, impartially and fully, the teaching of the New Testa-

ment on both departments of the subject before us. In so doing, I have dealt with each writer separately, endeavouring to comprehend his teaching as a whole and as distinguished from that of other sacred writers. I have then put together these various types of teaching and looked at them as a whole. This method enables us to see in theological perspective the doctrines before us, to estimate their proportionate place in the New Testament and in the Gospel of Christ and the amount and decisiveness of the evidence on which they rest.

The result of our inquiry is a definite and harmonious general doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ resting securely on the testimony of various sacred writers. Along with this general doctrine, which we may accept with confidence, we find in one passage of the Book of Revelation teaching not easy to harmonise with it; and we find here and there in the New Testament indications of an expectation of an early return of Christ not justified by the event. Various theories ancient and modern of the Future Punishment of Sin have been found to contradict or to go beyond the teaching of the New Testament But we have found underlying the teaching of all the writers of the New Testament, and have been able to formulate, a doctrine which claims the reverent approval of the moral sense of man, is in harmony with all we know about sin and about God, and is a powerful deterrent from sin.

It has been impossible to avoid many references to the original text of the New Testament. These references are inconvenient to thousands of intelligent students of the English Bible, who are eager to know all they can about the great topics here discussed. But, in spite of them, this important section of my readers will find in this volume abundant intelligible ground for rational conviction.

In quoting the Bible I have not limited myself to any one version, authorised or revised; but have translated each passage in such way as best to reproduce as accurately and fully as possible the sense of the original. Nor have I sought to make my renderings uniform. A variety of translations and of modes of translating is helpful to the English reader, by calling away his attention from the English phraseology to the sense intended by the Greek writer.

Not only in my formal translations, but in my many paraphrases and summaries of New Testament teaching, I have carefully reproduced, under guise of modern phraseology, the thought and expression of the sacred writers. How carefully this has been done, will appear most clearly to those most familiar with the original text of the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, the divisions of chapters and verses are taken always from the English Bible, even when this differs from that of the Hebrew original or of the Septuagint version. Occasionally, when two or

more English words represent one Greek word, they are connected by hyphens: e.g. *we-are-perishing*. In quotations, all italics are taken from the book quoted.

In the Notes, I have referred to several works on the subject treated in this volume. A more able work on the Second Coming of Christ than any of those there mentioned is a widely circulated volume entitled *Christ's Second Coming: will it be Premillennial?* by Dr. David Brown of Aberdeen, who in extreme old age, after an honoured life, has been called from us while this work was in the press. For more than fifty years it has held its place as by far the best work on the subject: and I have pleasure in recommending it as still worthy of careful study. It is a noble example of careful Biblical research. But, inasmuch as Dr. Brown's results are practically the same as my own, I have not further referred to his work.

Anticipations of this volume may be found in a series of papers in *The Expositor* extending over the year 1890 and dealing with the Future Punishment of Sin, and in another series in the same magazine four years later on the Second Coming of Christ. The reception given to these series and urgent requests from many readers have prompted me to hasten their republication in this volume. Comparison will show how thoroughly the subject has been worked over again. A still earlier anticipation of the former part of this volume was given in three articles in a symposium on

the Second Coming of Christ in *The British Weekly* during the summer of 1887.

That the results now republished will find universal approval, I cannot expect. But every line of this volume is a product of careful and prayerful thought. And I have stated, as the importance of the subject demands, without reserve and in the clearest language I could find, the results of my research. Moreover, inasmuch as these results are derived from and rest upon exposition of the New Testament, they can be successfully controverted only by disproof of the correctness of my interpretation. To the arbitrament of the Book of God, as read by the servants of Christ, under guidance of the Holy Spirit, I submit, for correction or addition, this small contribution to Christian Theology.

WESLEYAN COLLEGE, RICHMOND,
13th September, 1897.

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PART I

PRELIMINARY

LECTURE I

RETRIBUTION

OVER the whole future hangs a veil of uncertainty, an uncertainty deepening as the unseen future stretches further and further from the living present. At a short distance before us the dark shadow of death falls across the field of view. Behind it looms, on the pages of Holy Scripture, the great catastrophe which will close the present age and dissolve the solid fabric of the visible universe. Beyond this opens a terrible prospect of destruction awaiting those who reject the Gospel of Christ, and all the wicked, a dark counterpart to the eternal glory and blessedness which God has prepared for His faithful servants. The teaching of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, about these mysterious and profoundly interesting topics, I shall in this volume endeavour to reproduce and expound; and shall, as we pass along, discuss its

significance and worth and its practical bearing on the present faith and life of the servants of Christ. In PART I. I shall consider the general doctrine of retribution beyond the grave; and the present state of the departed. In PART II. we shall study the teaching of the Bible about the Second Coming of Christ: in PART III. we shall discuss the Future Punishment of Sin: and in PART IV., so far as the twilight of our present ignorance permits, we shall endeavour to catch a glimpse of the eternal home of the children of God.

In all the more developed systems of religion, and even among savage tribes, we find an expectation of retribution beyond the grave for all actions done in the present life. A good example of this wide-spread and deep conviction is found in a story of judgment in bk. x. of Plato's *Republic*. The same conviction underlies the Hindu doctrine of transmigration, which asserts that in future incarnations each one will receive due recompense for all deeds of former lives. This expectation of judgment to come is evoked in man probably by the manifest inequality of retribution in the present life, looked upon in the light of the supreme majesty of the Moral Sense, which forbids us to doubt that its commands will be vindicated by due reward and punishment.

This doctrine of retribution, and of retribution beyond the grave, is taught with increasing clearness in the Old and New Testaments. In the Pentateuch we have frequent mention of rewards and punishments following

obedience and sin; but these consist of material benefits to the nation as a whole. In the later books, a retribution beyond the grave comes into view. The mysterious Book of Ecclesiastes closes with a solemn warning, "God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." This suggests irresistibly an exact retribution such as is possible only beyond the grave. Still more definitely we read in Dan. xii. 1, 2 of a time to come when "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life and some to shame and eternal abhorrence."

In the New Testament, we find emphatic announcement of exact retribution for good and bad at a definite time in the future. At the opening of His ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matt. vii. 22, 23, Christ declares that "in that day" He will say, to some who claim to have prophesied in His name, "depart from Me, ye that work lawlessness." A similar picture of retribution for good and bad at a definite time called "the completion of the age" is found in ch. xiii. 41-43. So again in *v.* 49f, and in ch. xvi. 27 and ch. xxv. 31-46. This teaching is a conspicuous feature of the First Gospel. Similarly, in John v. 28f Christ asserts that "an hour comes in which all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will go forth, they who have done the good things to a resurrection of life and they who have done the bad things to a resurrection of judgment." Here again we have a definite time in the future for the reward and punishment of the righteous

and the wicked. In Rom. ii. 16 Paul writes about "a day when God will judge the secret things of men;" and in Acts xvii. 31 he is recorded to have announced that God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness." In Rev. xx. 11-15 the prophet sees a vision of resurrection and judgment: "the sea gave the dead in it; and death and Hades gave the dead in them: and they were judged, each according to their works."

These passages and others similar teach, and prove that the earliest followers of Christ believed, that the final and complete retribution for actions done on earth takes place, not at death as might be expected, but once for all at the close of the present order of life on earth.

Touching the method of this retribution, important indications are found in the letters of Paul. For he teaches that, just as the morning light unveils much which lay hidden under the darkness of the night, so the light of the great day will reveal the real nature of actions done in the present life. Under a variety of disguises we hide or try to hide ourselves even from those who know us best. And in the dim twilight of our own inner life we lie partially hidden even from ourselves. For personal bias warps our judgment of our own actions and character. But the light of that day will reveal whatever is hidden now. So 1 Cor. iv. 5: "until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of the darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. Then shall each one have his praise from God." Similarly ch. iii. 13f: "each one's work will become manifest. For the day will declare

it: because it is revealed in fire; and each one's work, of what sort it is, the fire will test. If any one's work abide, he shall receive reward."

This revelation will itself be, as the above passages suggest, exact retribution. For, even in the imperfect knowledge of the present life, the approbation or condemnation of our fellows is no small reward or punishment. In that day, our actions will be known to all. And, what is still more important, they will be fully known to ourselves. We shall be compelled, in the merciless light from which nothing can hide, to contemplate our sins and their far-reaching and terrible results, and to recognise all these as our own, as inevitable consequences of our own inexcusable folly and depravity. On the other hand, the faithful servants of Christ will, with wonder and with humble gratitude to Him who has wrought in them a good work, contemplate the blessed results of their own labour. "We all must needs be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what he did, whether good or bad:" 2 Cor. v. 10.

A similar thought is found in Rev. xx. 12: "books were opened . . . . and the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works."

Notice that this revelation and retribution are ever represented as taking place, not at death when we enter the unseen world, but on the morning of the great day.

LECTURE II

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DEPARTED

THE teaching expounded in Lect. I. implies an interval between death and the final judgment which at a definite time in the future will be pronounced, apparently simultaneously, on all men good and bad. The condition of the departed during this interval must differ, not only from their present state, but from their final condition. It is frequently and appropriately called *the Intermediate State*. We now inquire what light the Bible casts on this mysterious interval between the close of man's probation on earth and the judgment of the great day.

In 1 Cor. xv. 6, 18, 51, 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15, the dead servants of Christ are spoken of as having been "laid to sleep;" and in 1 Cor. xv. 20 as "sleeping." So 1 Thess. v. 10: "whether we keep awake, or sleep." Similarly John xi. 11: "Lazarus our friend is sleeping." The word used in this last passage is found also in the LXX. in the common phrase "slept with his fathers:" e.g. 1 Kgs. xi. 21, 43. In Isa. xiv. 8, in reference to the king of Babylon, who is compared to a fallen forest tree, we read, the same word being used, "since thou

didst fall asleep, no feller has come up against us." In 2 Macc. xii. 45 the righteous dead are said to be "sleeping with piety." From these passages we learn that the writers of the Bible were accustomed to look upon, and speak about, the righteous dead as sleeping.

That this conception was wider than Christian or Jewish thought, we learn from Homer's *Iliad* bk. xi. l. 240, where of a man killed in battle we read "he fell, and slept a sleep of brass." Similarly in Sophocles' *Electra* l. 509 we read "drowned in the sea, Myrtilus was laid to sleep."

This wide-spread conception is easily explained. For, to outward appearance and for a time, the dead differ from the living chiefly as being in a deep sleep from which none can awaken them.

This easy explanation forbids an inference, which some have drawn from the passages quoted above, that the dead are unconscious; that, just as in sound sleep we pass at once from our last waking thoughts to the light of morning, so in our last long sleep we shall pass unconsciously from the dark shadow of death to the light of the Judgment Day. This inference becomes the more uncertain when we remember that even bodily sleep is not always a state of unconsciousness, that frequently an appearance of profound repose does but conceal the strange consciousness and activity of a dream. That the sleep of death was not looked upon by the Greeks as involving unconsciousness, is proved by the picture of the dead given in bk. xi. of the *Odyssey*, where the slain heroes are described as fully

conscious, and as deploring their unfortunate lot. All this proves that nothing can be learnt touching the state of the dead from the metaphor of sleep used by some of the writers of the Bible. It refers only to their outward appearance. We must seek other evidence.

The evidence at our command is somewhat scanty. But all the references in the New Testament to the condition of the departed, good or bad, point steadily to a state of intelligent consciousness. In 2 Cor. v. 6-8 Paul writes about the living as "at home in the body, away from home from the Lord;" and desires "rather to be away from home from the body and to be at home with the Lord." This implies that for Paul to leave the body would be to go to a nearer presence of Christ compared with which his spiritual intercourse with Him on earth was absence. Similarly, in Phil. i. 23, he writes about death as "being with Christ" in a state "much better" than his present life on earth. In Luke xxiii. 43, Christ says to the penitent robber, "to-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." These passages involve consciousness. For the unconscious are nowhere, and with no one. They could hardly be said to be with Christ, even though in their unconsciousness they were protected by His power. Nor would a state of unconsciousness be "better," in Paul's view, than active service of Christ on earth. These quotations therefore point to a conscious and blessed intercourse of the righteous dead with Christ.

In Luke ix. 31 we have, on the mount of transfiguration, a vision of Moses and Elijah talking with

Christ about His approaching death. On the other hand, in ch. xvi. 28 we hear a conversation between Abraham and a departed spirit in torment. In Rev. vi. 9, 10, the souls of martyred servants of Christ cry to God, with a loud voice, from beneath the altar for vengeance upon their murderers. Each of these passages suggests, more or less clearly, that the dead, good and bad, are in a state of intelligent consciousness.

Already we have seen that the hypothesis of the unconsciousness of the departed is without reliable foundation. For it rests only on a metaphor quite consistent with the opposite hypothesis. Against the evidence just quoted, coming as it does from writers so various as Paul and the authors of the Third Gospel and of the Book of Revelation, it has no value whatever. In other words, the whole evidence, somewhat scanty as it is, points steadily to a belief by the early followers of Christ that the departed, both good and bad, are in a state of intelligent consciousness.

If the dead are conscious, then, in a very real sense, has their eternal reward and punishment already begun. For, to them, the conflict of life is over: and they must know its result. In Lect. XVII. we shall discuss the possibility of a further probation beyond the grave. But, be this as it may, the departed must know, as none can know on earth, how much they have gained or lost in the conflict now closed. This knowledge is itself a reward or punishment, an earnest of the exact retribution of the great day. The presence of the righteous dead with Christ is a foretaste of their eternal

and glorious intercourse with Him. In the one passage (Luke xvi. 23) in which we have a picture of a lost soul, that soul is in terrible anguish. And that anguish was evidently a punishment for sins committed on earth. In this very real sense, the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked begin at death. This we have inferred from the harmonious, though scanty, teaching of the New Testament. The harmonious and abundant teaching of the same declares that this anticipatory retribution will receive its full consummation at the coming of Christ to close the present order of things, to raise the dead, and to create a new earth and heaven.

We shall next consider the teaching of the Bible about this mysterious event, the sudden transition from the present order of things and from this preliminary retribution to the great and final consummation.

PART II

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

LECTURE III

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE BOOK OF ENOCH

THE new and complete revelation embodied in the New Testament is not only itself a development of the preliminary supernatural revelations embodied in the Old Testament but comes to us through the agency of men whose thoughts and phraseology were moulded by these earlier revelations. It is therefore all-important, in order to understand the sense in which the Apostles and Evangelists used their own words and in order to enter into their thoughts, to reproduce first in some measure any teaching of the Old Testament bearing upon the subject now before us and any Old Testament phraseology similar to that used in the New Testament. This I shall do in this lecture. And I shall supplement the teaching of the Old Testament by quoting other similar teaching in an important work which is in some sense a bridge, in date and in modes of thought, between

the Eschatology of the Old Testament and that of the New, viz. the Book of Enoch.

Joel begins his prophecy by announcing a calamity about to overwhelm, in consequence of their sins, the people of Judah and Jerusalem. This calamity he compares to the approach of an irresistible army consuming everything in its path; and the time of its approach he speaks of as the *day of Jehovah.* So Joel i. 15, "Alas for the day: for near is the day of Jehovah, and as destruction from the Almighty it will come;" and ch. ii. 1, 2, "Blow a trumpet in Zion, sound alarm in My holy mountain, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for there comes the day of Jehovah, for it is near; a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick darkness." Then follows a description of the invading army, concluding, in *vv.* 10, 11, thus: "before it earth trembles and heaven shakes, sun and moon have become dark, and stars have withdrawn their shining; and Jehovah has uttered His voice before His army; for very great is His camp, for strong is that which does His word, for great is the day of Jehovah and very terrible; who shall endure it?" Then follows an exhortation to repentance, and encouragement to return to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

In ch. ii. 28 (ch. iii. 1 in the Hebrew Bible) the prophet looks beyond the temporal deliverance which will follow repentance to still greater blessings in the future. The dissolution of nature, which in ch. ii. 10 was threatened as following the calamity announced by the prophet, is here placed in connection with the pouring out of the

Spirit upon all flesh at the coming of the terrible day of Jehovah.

The usual rendering of Joel ii. 31 (Engl.), "before the great and terrible day of the Lord come," suggests that the dissolution of nature is to precede, and thus be distinguished from, the great day of Jehovah: and this is the express rendering of the LXX. But we cannot conceive of the darkening of the sun as merely preceding this great and terrible day. It must be itself a herald visibly announcing that the day has come. And this is the meaning of the Hebrew word here used. I venture to suggest that it would be better translated "*at*," or, more literally, "at the presence of the coming of, the day of Jehovah."

Similar language is found again in Joel iii. 14, 15 (Engl.): "Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of Decision: for near is the day of Jehovah in the valley of Decision. Sun and moon have become dark, and stars have withdrawn their shining." The prophecy closes with an announcement of abiding blessing for Zion, and Jerusalem, and Judah; and of desolation for their enemies.

The occurrence of the phrase "day of Jehovah" five times in the short book of Joel gives to this phrase marked prominence. Evidently the prophet looked forward to a definite time of conspicuous punishment inflicted on the wicked, accompanied or followed by conspicuous blessing for the righteous.

The same phrase occurs three times in Amos v. 18-20, evidently describing a time when God will inflict

punishment. "The day of Jehovah is darkness and not light."

In Isa. ii. 11-17 we read, "The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. For there shall be a day for Jehovah of hosts upon every one proud and high, and upon all that is lifted up, and it shall be brought low. . And Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day."

In Isa. xiii. 6, in a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon, Joel i. 15 is repeated almost word for word: "Howl ye; for near is the day of Jehovah, as destruction from the Almighty it will come." The prophet continues in *v.* 9, in language very similar to Joel ii. 1-11, "Behold the day of Jehovah comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy its sinners out of it. For the stars of the heaven and their constellations shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine. And I will punish the world for evil, and wicked ones for their guilt."

Similar thought and language are found in Obad. 15, in a denunciation of Edom: "For near is the day of Jehovah upon all the heathen. According as thou hast done, it shall be done to thee; thy recompense shall return upon thy own head."

In Zeph. i. 7-16, after announcing a great destruction for the idolaters in Judah and Jerusalem, the prophet continues: "Be silent in the presence of the Lord

Jehovah; for near is the day of Jehovah, for Jehovah has prepared a sacrifice, He has sanctified His guests. And it shall be, in the day of Jehovah's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king's sons and all that are clothed with foreign clothing. . . . Near is the day of Jehovah, the great day, near and hasting greatly, the sound of the day of Jehovah. . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm, against the fenced cities and against the high battlements."

Similarly, in Ezek. xiii. 5 we read, "Ye have not gone up into the gaps, or made up a fence for the house of Israel in the day of Jehovah." Also ch. xxx. 3, 4, "Howl ye, alas for the day; for near is a day, and near is a day for Jehovah, a day of cloud, a time of nations it will be. And there shall come a sword against Egypt, and there shall be anguish in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude and her foundations shall be overturned."

A marked feature of Zech. xii.-xiv., some fifteen times, is the phrase "in that day," noting a definite time of retribution and blessing. This time is in Zech. xiv. 1, 2 referred to by the words "Behold a day comes for Jehovah . . . and I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for war;" recalling Isa. ii. 12.

The Books of the Prophets conclude, in Mal. iv. 5 (Engl.) with the words, "Behold I am sending to you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the day of

Jehovah, the great and the terrible day;" word for word as in Joel ii. 31.

In all these places, the day of Jehovah is a definite time of conspicuous execution of punishment against sin both in Israel and in the enemies of Israel. During long periods of forbearance, sinners seemed to have their day of high-handed rebellion. But the prophets foresaw that in His own time the unseen God will come forth from His hiding-place and vindicate the majesty of His forgotten authority. And this time, definite to their thought, they spoke of as Jehovah's day.

In many places in which the term "day of Jehovah" is not found, Old Testament prophecy culminates in complete victory of good over evil, manifesting itself in the punishment and downfall of sinners however mighty and in infinite blessing for the righteous. This latter is not unfrequently described in terms of loftiest grandeur. The deep faith in God thus revealed is a conspicuous difference between the Sacred Books of Israel and all contemporary literature.

Other prophetic teaching different from that quoted above both in phraseology and in modes of thought, yet in complete harmony with it, meets us in the Book of Daniel. The vision of Nebuchadnezzar in ch. ii. shows us a succession of empires culminating in, and overthrown by, one set up by God and never to be destroyed. In ch. vii., after a vision of four beasts successively rising from the sea, we read, in *v.* 13, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of Heaven One like a son of man, and He

came even to the Ancient of Days; and they brought Him near before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom one which shall not be destroyed." We have here a final victory of Heaven over Earth; and judgment executed (see *v.* 10: "judgment was set, and the books were opened") by One from heaven in human form.

In Dan. xii. 1, after various political convulsions, in a time of unparalleled trouble but of deliverance for those written in the book of God, we have a vision of "Michael, the great prince which stands for the sons of thy people." The writer continues, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame and eternal abhorrence. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." This can be no other than a general resurrection of the dead, good and bad. And this vision of judgment and of glory forms the distant horizon of the prophet's furthest vision.

The Book of Daniel differs somewhat from the other prophetic books of the Old Testament in that it takes us more definitely within the veil to an entirely new order of things; in that the Kingdom which is to supersede all earthly kingdoms is given to One who, though from heaven, yet wears a human form; and in that it

announces clearly a resurrection of the dead and a final retribution of reward and punishment beyond the grave. But all the prophetic writers of the Old Testament agree to announce a Kingdom of infinite glory to be set up more or less suddenly by power from heaven on the ruins of all earthly kingdoms, from which all evil and all sinners shall be excluded, the eternal home of the faithful servants of God.

Such, in scanty outline, were the thoughts of ancient Israel, at the close of the Canon, touching the furthest future within their view.

Any one who turns from the Old Testament Prophets, e.g. Joel or Isaiah, to the Eschatology of the New Testament becomes at once conscious of an immense gulf passed. This gulf, the Book of Daniel does something to span, or at least it affords a starting-point for the transition. But even between the Book of Daniel and the eschatological teaching of the New Testament is a wide interval of thought. We look eagerly for anything which will help us to bridge it. Especially we greet any document which will make vocal the long silence between the Old Testament and the New. Such help we find in the Book of Enoch.

The following quotations are taken from the admirable edition of the Rev. R. H. Charles, M.A., published in A.D. 1893. The best earlier translation is that of Dillmann, published in A.D. 1853. Indeed to this scholar more than to any other we owe our knowledge of the Book of Enoch. But the forty years which have elapsed

since his edition was published, and especially the British expedition to Abyssinia in 1861-2, have greatly increased the critical apparatus for the text of Enoch; and have enabled Mr. Charles to give us, in English, a much more reliable version of this ancient work.

The following quotations are taken from chs. xxxvii.-lxxi., which together form an integral part of the work, probably its latest part, written as Mr. Charles thinks some hundred years before the public ministry of Christ; and which certainly contain its most developed and interesting eschatological teaching. The quotations are only samples of the teaching of the entire section.

In ch. xlvi. 1-6 we read: "And there I saw One who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man (compare Dan. vii. 13, quoted above) and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me, 'This is the Son of Man, who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and his lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprighteousness for ever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their couches and the strong from their thrones, and will loosen the

reins of the strong and grind to powder the teeth of the sinners. And he will put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms because they do not extol and praise him, nor thankfully acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them. And he will put down the countenance of the strong, and shame will cover them, darkness will be their dwelling and worms their bed, and they will have no hope of rising from their beds because they do not extol the name of the Lord of Spirits."

In ch. xlvii. 3, we read: "And in those days I saw the Head of Days when he had seated himself on the throne of his glory, and the books of the living were opened before him, and his whole host which is in heaven above and around him stood before him."

Also very interesting is ch. xlviii. 2-6: "And at that hour that the Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, and his name before the Head of Days. And before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He will be a staff to the righteous on which they will support themselves and not fall, and he will be the light of the Gentiles and the hope of those who are troubled of heart. All who dwell on earth will fall down and bow the knee before him, and will bless and laud and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits." Lower down we read of the wicked, "they have denied the Lord of Spirits and his Anointed." The writer continues in ch. xlix. 2-4, "For he is mighty in all the secrets of righteousness,

and unrighteousness will disappear as a shadow, and have no continuance, because the Elect One standeth before the Lord of Spirits, and his glory is for ever and ever, and his might unto all generations. And in him dwells the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of him who gives knowledge, and the spirit of understanding, and of might, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness. And he will judge the secret things, and no one will be able to utter a lying word before him; for he is the Elect One before the Lord of Spirits, according to his good pleasure."

In ch. li. 1-5 we have mention of a resurrection of body and soul followed by judgment. "And in those days will the earth also give back those who are treasured up within it, and Sheol also will give back that which it has received, and hell will give back that which it owes. And he will choose the righteous and holy from among them; for the day of their redemption has drawn nigh. And the Elect One will in those days sit on my throne, and all the secrets of wisdom will stream forth from the counsels of his mouth; for the Lord of Spirits hath given it to him and hath glorified him. And in those days will the mountains leap like rams and the hills will skip like lambs satisfied with milk, and they will all become angels in heaven. Their faces will be lighted up with joy because in those days the Elect One hath appeared, and the earth will rejoice and the righteous will dwell upon it, and the elect will go to and fro upon it."

Again, in ch. lxii. 5-9 we read, "Pain will seize them

when they see that Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory. . . . For the Son of Man was hidden before him and the Most High preserved him in the presence of his might, and revealed him to the elect. . . . And all the kings and the mighty and the exalted and those that rule the earth will fall down on their faces before him and worship, and set their hope upon that Son of Man, and will petition him and supplicate for mercy at his hands."

In an earlier portion of the Book of Enoch, in ch. x. 6, 12, which we have in a fragment of an early Greek translation, and in chs. xix. 1, xxii. 4, 11, we read of "the day of judgment" and "the great day of judgment," and the "day of their judgment," and "the great day of judgment and punishment and torture of the revilers for ever."

The chief value of the Book of Enoch is that it reveals the large place in the thought of the Jews, in the century before Christ, occupied by teaching found in the Old Testament only in a few passages in the Book of Daniel. In Dan. vii. 31 we see on the throne a person distinct from the Most High, and said to be "like a son of man." This we have also in the Book of Enoch. But the Judge is there frequently and definitely spoken of as "the Son of Man;" and we are told that, before the sun and stars were created, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. We also read much more frequently and definitely than in the Old Testament of retribution beyond the grave in a day of universal judgment. Evidently, during the long and sad interval between the

last of the Old Testament prophets and the rousing voice of the Baptist, the heart of Israel turned, amid surrounding gloom, to a life beyond the grave. And, while they did so, their hopes gathered round One whom they conceived as bearing a human form yet coming from heaven.

In Lect. IV. we shall see how, a century probably after the latest part of the Book of Enoch was written, these hopes shaped themselves in the mind of an earnest Pharisee who had become a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth.

LECTURE IV

THE TEACHING OF PAUL

WE shall now reproduce the conception of the Second Coming of Christ reflected in the Epistles of Paul, and endeavour to determine the place and comparative importance of this topic in his conception of the Gospel as a whole. In so doing, we will take the epistles in chronological order. And with them we will compare some references to the same subject in addresses of Paul recorded in the Book of Acts.

In 1 Thess. i. 10 Paul describes his readers' conversion as a turning "from the idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." This implies that during the few weeks in which he had founded the Church at Thessalonica he had taught his young converts that Christ, "raised from the dead," would return from heaven to earth; and implies also that an expectation of His return was a conspicuous element of the new life and hope which they had received.

In ch. ii. 19 we read, "what is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus at His coming?" Similarly in ch. iii. 13: "establish

your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." In ch. iv. 13-18, Paul seeks to remove sorrow caused by the death of some members of the Church by pointing to the return of Christ and to the consequent resurrection of the dead. In contrast to those for whom his readers mourn, the Apostle speaks of himself and them as "being left behind for the coming of the Lord." In each of these three passages, and in others similar, the English rendering *coming* represents the conspicuous Greek word *παρουσία*, which now demands attention.

Like the verb *πάρεστι*, the substantive *παρουσία* denotes the presence of some one standing by. So Phil. ii. 12, where it is contrasted with *ἀπουσία*, "not as in my *presence* only, but now much more in my absence:" and 2 Cor. x. 10, "the *presence* of the body (i.e. Paul's bodily presence) is weak." More frequently it denotes the presence of a fresh arrival. So 1 Cor. xvi. 17, "I rejoice at the *coming* (*ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ*) of Stephanas;" 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7, "the *coming* of Titus," twice; Phil. i. 26, "my *coming* again to you." The same word is used to describe the coming of Christ for which the Christians at Thessalonica were waiting, in 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15, quoted above; in ch. v. 23, 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8, 1 Cor. xv. 23, as also in James v. 7, 8, 2 Peter i. 16, iii. 4, 12, 1 John ii. 28, Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39. This use of the same word with the same reference by different writers of the New Testament proves it to be a technical term of the early followers of Christ denoting

their Master's expected return. And its suitability is at once apparent. Touching His bodily form, Christ is now *absent* in heaven: on that day He will be visibly *present* on earth. And His presence will bring in at once the great consummation for which His followers are waiting.

The *coming* of Christ and its immediate consequences are described with graphic detail in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17: "the Lord Himself, with shout, with voice of archangel, with trumpet of God, (notice the climax,) will come down from heaven; and the dead in Christ will rise first." Then will the living, who, as Paul writes, are "being left behind" by the hand of death while others are taken away, be snatched up, along with those just raised from the dead, into a supermundane region, surrounded by clouds, to meet their Lord. And, "in this way" entering into His presence, they will be with Him for ever.

This graphic description proves that the word παρουσία in this and similar passages denotes, not spiritual intercourse in the unseen world, but a bodily arrival of Christ.

The word *first* emphasises the priority of this resurrection to the meeting of the living ones with Christ. It thus supports the assertion in *v.* 15: "we, the living ones, . . . shall in no wise precede those that have fallen asleep." It finds a counterpart in *v.* 17: "the dead in Christ will rise *first*; *then* the living ones . . . shall be caught up." This simple and complete explanation of these words forbids us to infer from them a later

resurrection of the dead without Christ. Of these last nothing whatever is here said. Writing as a servant of Christ, the Apostle thinks only of his fellow-servants, dead and living. Evidently the words "we the living" refer only to believers. For they only "will be for ever with the Lord." All others lie outside the writer's thought. We have simply the shout, the descent, the resurrection, and the snatching up of the living servants of Christ to meet Him in the air.

In 1 Thess. v. 2 we read that the "day of the Lord so comes as a thief at night." The words *ἡμέρα Κυρίου* are already familiar to us as the LXX. rendering of "the day of Jehovah" in the passages from the prophets quoted in Lect. III. It is impossible to doubt that here the day of the Lord is the time of the return of Christ already mentioned in each of the first four chapters of this epistle. And, if so, *v.* 3 asserts that the coming of Christ, which to His servants dead and living will be a reunion with their Lord, will be to others "sudden destruction." This is in close agreement with the passages from the Old Testament quoted in Lect. III., in which the day of Jehovah is described as a time of punishment to the wicked and of blessing to the righteous. It implies that at Christ's coming there will be sin and sinners upon earth.

Then follows a beautiful metaphor based on the word *day*. To the wicked, the return of Christ will come suddenly and unexpectedly, "as a thief at night," under cover of darkness. But Paul's readers "are not in darkness." Consequently, "the day" will not "lay

hold" of them "as does a thief." They are "sons of light and sons of day." The Apostle bids them act as such, as men do who walk in light, whom no thief can surprise. The same metaphor meets us again, in a later group of Paul's letters, in Rom. xiii. 11-13: "The hour has come that we at once awake from sleep. . . . The night is far spent, the day has drawn near. Let us then put off the work of darkness and put on the weapons of the light. As in the day, let us walk decently." In contrast to the day of the Lord, the present life seemed to this great teacher to be but the passing hours of a *night*. And already to the eye of faith the dawning light proclaims that the day is near.

The word παρουσία meets us for the fourth time in this short epistle in 1 Thess. v. 23, where Paul prays that his readers may be "preserved blamelessly in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He desires that in the day of judgment they may be found blameless.

In a second letter to the same Church at Thessalonica, the Apostle writes to correct, apparently, a misunderstanding of his earlier letter. He speaks in ch. i. 6 of a just recompense, viz. affliction for those who afflict, and for those who are afflicted rest; and speaks of this as taking place "at the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven with angels of His power." We have here another phrase describing evidently the coming of Christ for which the Thessalonican Christians were waiting, "the *revelation* (or *unveiling*) of the Lord Jesus." He is now hidden from our view; but in that

day the veil will be rent, and the hidden One will appear. In other words, the coming of Christ will be not only audible but visible. Since the veiled One is in heaven, and on that day will appear on earth, the unveiling is said to be "from heaven;" as in 1 Thess. iv. 16 we read that He "will come down from heaven." He will be accompanied by inhabitants of heaven, ministers of His power; and by *fire*, the most searching of natural forces.

The punishment and persons punished, already described in 2 Thess. i. 6, and the punishment said in *v.* 7 to be inflicted at the revelation of the Lord Jesus, are in *vv.* 8, 9 further specified. He will inflict vengeance on "those who know not God, and those who obey not the Gospel." Their penalty will be "eternal destruction," removing them "from the face" of Christ and from the splendour which belongs to the power which on that day He will put forth.

The time of this punishment is further described as "when He shall come to be glorified in (or among) His saints, and to be wondered at in all those that believed." The words "when He shall come," used evidently as an equivalent to "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus" in *v.* 7, still further identify this last phrase as a description of the event for which the readers of this epistle were waiting. The words "in that day" recall the same words in Isa. ii. 11 and eleven times in Zech. xii.-xiv., as quoted in Lect. III. It is another link between the day of the Lord in the New Testament and the day of Jehovah in the Old.

In 2 Thess. ii. 1, Paul speaks again "about the coming (*τῆς παρουσίας*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together before Him." He warns his readers against supposing that "the day of the Lord has come," i.e. is now beginning; thus linking together, as technical terms for the same event, the *παρουσία* and "the day of the Lord." He adds that Christ will not come until "the Apostasy come first;" that there will be no "revelation of the Lord Jesus" until "the man of sin be revealed:" ch. i. 10, ii. 3. This "son of destruction" is then further described. Something now holds him back, in order that he "may be revealed in his (appropriate) season." The revelation of this "lawless one" is in ch. ii. 9 described as a *παρουσία* and as accompanied by a manifold and mighty activity of Satan which will deceive and destroy those who refuse to believe the truth. This use of the same words *παρουσία* and *revelation* (or *revealed*) to describe the advent of the "son of destruction" and that of Christ places these two antagonistic forces in conspicuous and awful contrast.

This teaching implies that the coming of Christ will be preceded by the appearance of a new and terrible form of evil. In marked contrast to this future *revelation* we are told in *v.* 7 that "the *mystery* of lawlessness is already working," although under restraint. When this restraint is removed, it will be *revealed*, i.e. will work, no longer secretly, but openly. This revelation marks a conspicuous development of evil on earth. What this new form of evil will be, we know not except as it

is dimly shadowed forth in this chapter. But, that its manifestation is to be a new era in the working of the kingdom of darkness, implies that it will be altogether different from all kinds of evil now seen at work around us. We must be content with the general description here given, viz. that it will be an activity of Satan, that it will claim divine honours, and will delude those who reject the light of the Gospel.

The course of events is further described in *vv.* 7, 8. We have a restraining influence, "until it be taken out of the way: and then will the Lawless One be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and will bring to nothing by the appearance of His coming:" *τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας*. This implies that the coming of Christ will be visible, that up to the moment of His appearance a new and terrible form of evil will be in power, and that this hostile power will fade into nothing at the voice and appearance of Christ.

Such is the clear and harmonious teaching of the Epistles to the Thessalonians. Paul was looking for a definite time when Christ will audibly and visibly return from heaven to earth, to raise His dead servants, to welcome all His servants dead and living into endless and blessed intercourse with Himself, and to destroy all who refuse to obey the Gospel. He taught also that this revelation of Christ, who is now hidden from our view, will be preceded by an outward manifestation, in some new and awful form, of that evil which is already secretly operating among men, and that this

new manifestation of it will continue in power until it be dethroned by the appearance of Christ.

The frequent occurrence, in these early epistles, of the terms *παρουσία, day of the Lord, revelation, appearance*, which we shall find used frequently not only in the other epistles of Paul but also in other parts of the New Testament, proves that they were already technical terms used to describe the expected return of Christ.

Similar teaching is found in Paul's other letters; but not with equal prominence. The Corinthian Christians, as we read in 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, were "waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and the Apostle hoped that "in the day of our Lord Jesus" they will be without reproach. So familiar to his thought was that time that he speaks of it in ch. iii. 13 as "the day," and declares, in close agreement with 2 Thess. i. 8, that "it will be revealed in fire," and that the fire will test every man's work and determine his reward. In chs. iv. 5, xi. 26, we have casual references to the coming of Christ.

In 1 Cor. xv. 20-23 Paul asserts, as already in 1 Thess. iv. 14, 16, that just as Christ rose from the dead so will His servants rise: "as firstfruit, Christ, then they who are Christ's at His coming (*ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ*), then the end." Here, as in 1 Thess. iv. 16, Paul speaks only of the resurrection of the servants of Christ. All others are throughout the chapter left entirely out of sight. So especially in *v.* 43, "it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown

in weakness, it is raised in power:" words true only of the saved. This being so, we have no right to infer from the passage before us that at the coming of Christ only His people will rise.

The resurrection of the righteous is more fully described in *vv.* 50-57. We have here not only a definite day but a definite moment, and we have again the sound of a trumpet, a sound never to be repeated; "in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." And, as before, the trumpet will be at once followed by resurrection of the dead. As before, the raising of the dead will affect the living. But we are now told that these last will be changed. This change is made needful by the constitution of their bodies, which unfits them for the Kingdom of God: for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." But the corruptible and mortal will clothe itself with incorruption and deathlessness. This will be the last victory over the last enemy.

The resurrection of believers mentioned in this chapter is evidently bodily: "it is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body." So Rom. viii. 11, "will make alive your mortal body:" and Phil. iii. 21, "will transfigure the body of our humiliation." Consequently, the resurrection of Christ must also be bodily. For a merely spiritual manifestation of Christ after His death could not remove objections to a bodily resurrection of believers. And if the resurrection of Christ and of His people be bodily, Christ's return to earth must also be bodily. In other words, Paul expected that

the body of Christ raised (Rom. viii. 34) from the grave to heaven will in that day return from heaven to earth.

This expectation does not imply that the resurrection body of believers will contain the same particles of matter as that laid in the grave. Indeed these particles do not continue the same during life. But it seems to me to imply that our spirits will again clothe themselves in bodily forms; in forms related probably, in some way to us inconceivable but real, to the bodies laid in the grave.

In 1 Cor. xv. 51, as in 1 Thess. iv. 15, Paul puts himself among those who will survive the coming of Christ: "we, the living, who are being left for the coming of Christ," and "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This implies fairly that the Apostle did not know that long ages would elapse between his own day and the day of Christ. But we have no right to infer that he had a definite and confident expectation that he would himself survive to that day. For, in rhetorical figure he often identifies himself with that which he describes: e.g. Rom. iii. 7, "If the truth of God by my lie abounded for His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" Probably in this matter hope and fear alternated with his circumstances and his frame of mind. In 2 Cor. v. 6-8, he certainly ponders the possibility of his own death; influenced perhaps by the deadly peril referred to in ch. i. 9. Still, finding himself preserved from day to day, and not knowing how soon Christ will appear, he

might easily look upon, and write about, himself as "being left for the coming of Christ," in contrast to those who had fallen asleep.

This hope, thus faintly expressed, was not destroyed by Paul's knowledge that the appearance of "the lawless one" must precede the coming of Christ. For, the wonderfully rapid progress of the Kingdom of God during the last twenty-five or thirty years permitted a hope that possibly the remaining years of his life might suffice for the appearance and short reign of the man of sin and for his destruction by the appearance of Christ. In any case, Paul's hope of himself surviving the coming of Christ, which finds indefinite expression only in these two passages, is no essential part of his plain and abundant and conspicuous teaching that Christ will return to raise the dead and judge all men.

It is worthy of note that the clearest expression of this hope is in the earliest of Paul's letters; and that the only other expression of it is in what is probably the earliest letter of the second group. In another letter of the same group, he weighs the possibility of his death; and does this more seriously in a letter of the third group, that to the Philippians. In the last of his letters, the second to Timothy, he contemplates the near approach of death.

We notice also that in Acts xx. 24, 29, in an address given before his arrest at Jerusalem and therefore some years before his death, Paul refers to his own death, "that I may complete my course;" and says that after his "departure wolves will enter into," and not spare, the

flock. This proves that the historian did not believe that at that time Paul confidently expected to survive the coming of Christ. And a unanimous tradition reaching back to the second century, supported by internal evidence, asserts that the historian was a friend and companion of the Apostle. These references to his death, which are supported by 2 Cor. v. 6-8, have more weight touching Paul's actual expectation than have the two casual allusions in his epistles quoted above. Certainly, a confident expectation that he would survive the coming of Christ was no part of the faith of the Apostle. But abundant evidence in nearly all his epistles leaves no room to doubt that he confidently and joyfully expected, at some unknown time, the bodily return of Christ to raise the dead and to bring in the eternal glory.

Resurrection of the dead is mentioned in 2 Cor. iv. 14: "He that raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus." In ch. v. 10, the Apostle asserts that himself and his readers "must be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive the things done through the instrumentality of the body . . . whether good or bad." This suggests irresistibly a simultaneous judgment of good and bad men. In Rom. xiv. 10, we have similar teaching.

The Epistle to the Galatians contains no clear reference to the Second Coming of Christ. But we have in ch. vi. 7, 8, a solemn assertion of exact retribution.

In Rom. ii. 5, we read of a "day of anger and of

revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will give back to each one according to his works;" and in *v.* 16 of a "day when God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ." In ch. viii. 19-23, Paul declares that the whole "creation is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God;" and that himself and his readers are "waiting for the redemption of the body." This passage implies that salvation will not be complete until the bodies of the adopted sons of God are rescued from the grave. In ch. xi. 25, 26 he speaks of hardening as having come to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles come in; and says that then "all Israel will be saved." This implies real progress of the Kingdom of God under the present order of things. After this progress, we must place the great apostasy mentioned in an earlier epistle. To Rom. xiii. 11-13, xiv. 10, I have already referred.

In Phil. i. 6, in the third group of Paul's letters, we read of the "day of Jesus Christ" as the time of the completion of the good work already begun in the Christians at Philippi. In ch. iii. 11, he speaks of "the resurrection from the dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν) as the ultimate goal of his desire and effort. The phrase here used is found elsewhere only in Luke xx. 35, for the resurrection of believers, and in Acts iv. 2, 1 Peter i. 3, for that of Christ. It suggests a removal of the risen ones from among the dead; and is therefore inapplicable to, and is never used for, the lost. For they "shall not see life" (John iii. 36); and will be still dead and among the dead even when risen. But this by no means implies

or suggests an earlier resurrection of the saved. For two very different resurrections may take place at the same time; as we read in John v. 29.

In Phil. iii. 20, 21 we read, in close harmony with the passages quoted above, "our commonwealth is in heaven, whence we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things to Himself." This transfiguration must include the raising of the dead and the complete change of those who survive the coming of Christ. Each of these will demand a putting forth of the infinite power of Christ. These verses prove that the alternative of death and life which in ch. i. 20-24 Paul ponders so seriously did not prevent him from joining in the joyful hope of glory shared by all the servants of Christ in his day.

In Eph. iv. 30, the readers are reminded that in the Holy Spirit they "were sealed for the day of redemption." This "redemption" can be no other than that of the body, which will rise from the bondage of death on the day of Christ's return. The appearance of Christ is mentioned in Col. iii. 4: "When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." These casual references, amid topics quite different, reveal, deeply rooted in the thought of Paul, an expectation of the return of Christ to complete the salvation already begun.

In the last group of his epistles, in 1 Tim. vi. 14,

we read, "without reproach till the appearance (*τῆς ἐπιφανείας*, as in 2 Thess. ii. 8) of our Lord Jesus Christ." So Titus ii. 13, "waiting for the blessed hope and *appearance* of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Christ Jesus." In 2 Tim. i. 10 the same word is used of the first coming of Christ, thus putting it in conspicuous relation to His second coming. In *v.* 18 Paul prays that his friend "may find mercy from the Lord in *that day*." So *v.* 12: "able to guard to *that day*." These last words, already found in 2 Thess. i. 10, occur again in 2 Tim. iv. 8, "the crown which the Lord will give me in *that day*, the righteous Judge; and not to me only but to all them that love His *appearance*." This last word (*ἐπιφανεία*) is that already found in 2 Thess. ii. 8, 1 Tim. vi. 14, Titus ii. 13, 2 Tim. i. 10, iv. 8. It occurs also in 2 Tim. iv. 1: "I charge thee in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by His *appearance* and His Kingdom."

In Paul's address at Athens, recorded in Acts xvii. 22-31, we read, in *v.* 31, "He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, in a Man whom He has marked out." In Acts xxiv. 15 he expresses his hope in God "that there will be a resurrection both of righteous men and of unrighteous." These are the only references to the Second Coming of Christ in Paul's recorded speeches.

From the foregoing it will appear that Paul's teaching about the Second Coming of Christ is, both in thought and phraseology, the same in all his epistles. Indeed

the chronological order of his letters does not reveal in this subject, as it does in some others, development of thought. Evidently his thought on this topic was fully matured when he wrote his earliest epistles.

It is also worthy of note that in these letters, written to recent converts, the subject before us occupies a much larger place than it does in those written later to older churches. This suggests that Paul looked upon this topic as belonging to the rudiments of the Christian faith. And this we can well understand. In the synagogue at Thessalonica he preached, as we read in Acts xvii. 3, that Jesus is the Anointed Deliverer and that He had risen from the dead. He certainly added (cp. Acts xiii. 38) that through Him is proclaimed forgiveness of sins for all who believe His words. It was natural for him to add, as we infer from 1 Thess. v. 1, that He who was raised from the dead will return to reward or punish those who accept or reject His offered salvation. But when converts were gathered together into churches, they would need other teaching about the practical bearing of the Gospel upon the details of personal and social life. This further and more varied teaching would occupy attention, and thus leave less room in the later epistles, as there was less need, for teaching about a topic already sufficiently understood. And, as we have seen, occasional references are not wanting, even in these later letters. The large space occupied by this subject in 1 Thessalonians was also caused apparently by the unexpected death of some church-members and the sorrow caused

thereby: the second letter was written (ch. ii. 1) in part to correct a misunderstanding caused by the first.

The Second Coming of Christ can scarcely be reckoned among the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel as Paul understood it. In the systematic exposition of that Gospel given in the Epistle to the Romans, it has no prominent place; and it receives only casual mention in the profound Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. But, while occupying only a subordinate place, it is, as the above quotations prove, an essential part (cp. Rom. ii. 16) of the Gospel of Paul.

Much less important is the Apostle's faint hope of himself surviving the return of Christ. For this hope finds casual and indefinite expression only in two places in his epistles; whereas his confident expectation that Christ will, in bodily form, return to raise the dead and judge all men finds definite expression in all his epistles except those to the Galatians and to Philemon, each of which deals with special and personal topics; and is a conspicuous feature of three of them, viz. 1 and 2 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians.

We may now sum up the expectation of the greatest of the Apostles of Christ touching the future. Paul looked forward to continued progress of the Gospel, to the gathering in of the fulness of the Gentiles and then of Israel. But beyond this progress he foresaw an awful manifestation, in a new and conspicuous form, of the evil already working in the wicked. This new revelation of evil, in the moment of its power, Christ will dethrone and destroy by His sudden and audible

and visible appearance from heaven. At His coming, His dead servants will wake up from their long sleep; and with the changed forms of those still living will enter into the eternal and glorious Kingdom of Christ and of God.

LECTURE V

THE SYNOPTIST GOSPELS

WE shall now consider the teaching of documents presenting a definite type of thought differing widely from that embodied in the Epistles of Paul.

The phrase "that day," already found in 2 Thess. i. 10, 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, iv. 8, occurs again in Matt. vii. 22, xxiv. 36, Mark xiii. 32, Luke x. 12, xvii. 31, xxi. 34; referring in each case to Christ's return to judge the world. Its use, without further specification, in this definite sense, reveals the definite place of the day of judgment in the thought of the early followers of Christ. The words "till the Son of Man come," in Matt. x. 23, recall at once Dan. vii. 13, "there came with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man;" and the similar teaching in the Book of Enoch, quoted in Lect. III. This reminiscence is confirmed by the frequent use in the Synoptist Gospels of the term *Son of Man* in reference to His return to judge the world. (See below.) That in the casual allusion before us the word *come* is considered sufficiently definite to indicate our Lord's meaning, proves that His coming was already familiar to His disciples.

The coming of Christ is depicted in plain language in

Matt. xiii. 40-43: "So will it be at the completion of the age. The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all the snares and those that do lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the wailing and the gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Still more definite is Matt. xvi. 27, 28: "The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He will give back to each according to his action. Verily, I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Notice here twice the term *Son of Man.* The *coming* mentioned in *v.* 27 is evidently Christ's coming to judge the world: for only then "will He give to each one according to his action." And it is difficult to give any other meaning to the words "see the Son of Man coming" in the next verse. Yet nothing happened during the lifetime of the men then standing around Christ which could fairly and intelligibly be described by the words "see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Certainly there was no visible coming of Christ, as some have suggested, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

This serious difficulty is, I think, somewhat relieved by a comparison with the parallel passages in the Second and Third Gospels. In Mark ix. 1, Christ is represented as saying "until they see the Kingdom of God having come in power." The Greek perfect

ἐληλυθυῖαν describes the abiding effect of the coming of the Kingdom of God. In Luke ix. 27 we read simply "till they see the Kingdom of God." Now the general context, and especially the words "there are some of those standing here who will not taste death till they see," which are found almost word for word in each of the Synoptists, leave no room for doubt that the three are reports of the same discourse of Christ. But we notice that, whereas Matthew [1] speaks of seeing "the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom," Luke speaks only of seeing "the Kingdom of God," and Mark of seeing "the Kingdom of God come in power." The second and third phrases describe correctly the events of the day of Pentecost. On that day, the Apostles, who a few months before had heard, standing by Christ, the words now before us, saw the Kingdom of God actually set up on earth in a manner unknown before, and amid a wonderful manifestation of the power of God. If this exposition be correct, the coming of the Son of Man in Mark viii. 38 and the coming of the Kingdom of God in the next verse (so Luke ix. 26, 27) refer to different events: and this is permitted or suggested by the different words used, by each Evangelist, in the consecutive verses. On the other hand, in Matt. xvi. 27, 28, the similar phraseology suggests irresistibly a reference, in both verses, to the same event.

The only explanation of all this, which I can suggest,

[1] The use of the names "Matthew" and "Mark" to distinguish the Gospels is merely conventional. My argument does not involve any assumption about the authorship of the Gospels.

is that of the three reports before us the second and third, which are practically the same, reproduce more correctly the words actually spoken by Christ; and that the account given in the First Gospel was coloured by the eager hope of the early followers of Christ for their Master's speedy return.

The hope thus expressed has important apologetic value. For no writer or compiler in the second century, when the last survivor of the days of Christ had long ago passed away, would have represented Christ as saying that some around Him would survive His coming to judge the world. Consequently the passage before us is a sure indication of the early date of the First Gospel: and the early date, thus proved, greatly increases its value as a witness of what Christ actually did and said. If our Lord spoke the words attributed to Him in the Second and Third Gospels, we can easily understand how His contemporaries, confusing two distinct events, each of which was then hidden in the unknown future, attributed to Him the words recorded in Matt. xvi. 27, 28, words differing in form so little, though in meaning so much, from those which He seems to have actually used. But this confusion would have been impossible after our Lord's meaning had been made clear by events. It therefore confirms the unanimous tradition, reaching back to the second century, which attributes the First Gospel to an Apostle and the Second and Third to friends of Apostles. This important evidence abundantly compensates for the difficulty now before us.

In Matt. x. 23 Christ enjoins His disciples when persecuted in one city to flee to another; and supports His injunction by adding, "For verily, I say to you, ye will not have completed the cities of Israel till the Son of Man come." These words, which have no parallel in the other Synoptists, are not, like ch. xvi. 28, an explicit assertion, but only a casual allusion. It is, however, an allusion which could not have been made after the land of Israel had for more than a generation been depopulated of its ancient inhabitants. It is therefore another sure mark of the very early date of the First Gospel.

In Luke xvii. 22-37, a passage which has no exact counterpart in the other Synoptists, although containing verses which have close parallels there, we read, in close agreement with 2 Thess. i. 7, of the "day when the Son of Man is *revealed*." This day is compared, in Luke xvii. 26, to the "day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and took them all away;" and in *v.* 29 to the "day when Lot went forth from Sodom, and it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed all." Our Lord thus teaches, in close agreement with 1 Thess. v. 3, that His coming will be to the wicked a sudden and overwhelming destruction; and, as Paul teaches more fully in 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, that it will be preceded by general demoralisation.

The important and difficult parallel chapters, Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi. 5-36, demand now careful study.

In all three Synoptists, the discourse is introduced by

the disciples showing to Christ the beautiful buildings of the temple, and by Christ's reply that the time will come when of those buildings not one stone will be left upon another. The disciples ask Him, (some time afterwards and sitting upon the Mount of Olives, as Matthew and Mark narrate,) "When shall these things be?" To this question Matthew adds another, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming (*παρουσία*) and of the end of the age?" The word *παρουσία* recalls at once the same word used frequently by Paul, in a technical sense, for the return of Christ to judge the world. The phrase "completion of the age" we have found already in Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49, denoting the close of the present order of things by the final judgment; and in ch. xxviii. 20, denoting the close of the evangelical activity of the servants of Christ. The use elsewhere of the terms *παρουσία* and *completion of the age* suggests irresistibly that both refer to one event, and to the event to which the former term refers when used by Paul.

To these questions, our Lord replies by words of warning, "See that no one deceive you;" and then opens to His disciples a vista of tumults and persecutions, concluding with an announcement, "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a testimony to all the nations: and then shall come the end." The word *τέλος* refers evidently to the *συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος* about which the disciples had questioned their Master.

Next follows a practical and positive direction. The

sign given by Matthew and Mark is "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place," or "where it must not" stand: that given by Luke is "Jerusalem surrounded by camps." But in all three the injunction is the same, with one trifling exception, word for word: "Then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains." Then follows (Matthew and Mark) unheard-of tribulation; and (Luke) slaughter and the people carried away captive to all lands, and "Jerusalem trodden under foot by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." These last words suggest that the destruction of the city will be followed by a long period of desolation.

After these words, Luke represents Christ as announcing the dissolution of nature and the appearance of the Son of Man in the sky. Matthew and Mark give a warning against false-Christs and false-prophets, and add "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matthew) or "in those days, after that tribulation" (Mark) "the sun shall be darkened . . . and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds." The appearance of Christ will be followed, as He teaches here and elsewhere in these Gospels, by the sending forth of His angels to gather together His people from the ends of the earth.

An important turning-point common to the three accounts of this discourse is found in Matt. xxiv. 32, Mark xiii. 28, Luke xxi. 29, in the parable of the fig tree putting forth its young shoots as harbingers of approaching summer. In each account, this parable is followed by the assertion, given in almost identical

words, "Verily I say to you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things take place." The word γενεά can refer only to the men living in Christ's day. And, at first sight, the words "all these things" seem to include the appearance of Christ from heaven. But this first impression is somewhat modified by the verse following, which is the same almost word for word in the First and Second Gospels: "But about that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, except My Father only." For, in these words, the day of Christ's return, which is unknown even to the Son, is placed in conspicuous contrast to events which will happen during the present generation. The colourless English rendering "*that* day" poorly reproduces the emphasis of the Greek pronoun ἐκείνης which points conspicuously to something at a distance from the speaker. This contrasted collocation suggests that the words "all these things" in Matt. xxiv. 34, Mark xiii. 30, refer to the fall of Jerusalem, and the verse following to the Second Coming of Christ. This explanation, however, does not apply to the Third Gospel, which has no parallel to the verse in question.

The above explanations remove the difficulty before us, even in the First and Second Gospels, only partially. All three reports of this important discourse of Christ seem to be coloured by the eager hopes of the first generation of the followers of Christ. And this colouring bears witness to the very early date of the tradition embodied in the Synoptist Gospels.

Then follows in Matthew and Mark a comparison of

the coming of Christ to the flood, similar to that recorded, at an earlier period of our Lord's ministry, in Luke xvii. 26, 27; and in all three Gospels a warning to watch.

As the Bridegroom in the parable of the Ten Virgins, the coming of Christ is mentioned again in Matt. xxv. 10: and we notice that He is represented as lingering; another indication of delay in Christ's return, among indications that His return was close at hand. This apparent contradiction is easily explained by the uncertainty of the early Christians about an eagerly expected event still future. A similar indication of delay is found in *v.* 19: "After a long time the Lord of those servants comes." The whole parable refers evidently to Christ's coming in the Day of Judgment.

In *vv.* 31-46 we have another description of the coming of Christ to judge all men good and bad: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Then follow a welcome to the righteous, and a tremendous sentence on the wicked; in close agreement with the teaching of Paul.

The coming of Christ to judge the world is one of the most conspicuous features of the First Gospel. And, with the exception of somewhat varying indications of the earlier or later time of His return, the picture is harmonious throughout. Equally harmonious and

scarcely less conspicuous, is the teaching of the Second and Third Gospels. Still more remarkable, considering the wide difference in forms of expression and modes of thought between the Synoptist Gospels, especially the First Gospel, on the one hand, and the Epistles of Paul on the other, is the close agreement, both in thought and diction, of all these documents touching the matter before us. The only real differences are that the hope of an early return of Christ, which in the Epistles of Paul finds only faint expression in two ambiguous passages, finds in the Synoptist Gospels, especially in the First Gospel, much more definite expression; and that the new and terrible form of evil foretold by Paul is by the Evangelists only suggested in a comparison of the days before Christ's return with those before the flood. The eager desire of some of His followers anticipated their Lord's return as close at hand: but the sober thought of Paul warns them that before the coming of Christ there must come first an embodiment of evil in its most awful form.

The same teaching about the return of Christ is found, though less conspicuously, in the Book of Acts. In ch. i. 11, angels announce to the disciples on Olivet, "this Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will so come in the manner in which ye saw Him going into heaven." In Acts iii. 19-21, Peter sets before his hearers a hope "that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Christ Jesus, fore-appointed for you,

whom heaven must needs receive until the times of restitution of all things." He speaks again in ch. x. 42 of Jesus as "ordained by God Judge of men living and dead." Similarly Paul at Athens, as recorded in Acts xvii. 31, preached that God had "set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He has ordained." In ch. xxiv. 15 he expresses a hope that there "will be a resurrection of both righteous and unrighteous."

Similar thought and phraseology are found in James v. 7-9: "Be patient, brethren, till the *coming* (*παρουσία*) of the Lord . . . the *coming* of the Lord has come near . . . the Judge stands before the door." The phraseology and thought of Paul are found also in 1 Peter i. 5, "salvation ready to be revealed at the last time;" and in *vv.* 7, 13, "in the revelation of Jesus Christ." So again in ch. iv. 5-7, "who will give account to Him that is ready to judge living men and dead. . . . The end of all things has come near." And *v.* 13: "that, at the revelation of His glory, ye may rejoice with exceeding joy." Also ch. v. 1, "a sharer of the glory about to be revealed;" and *v.* 4, "when the chief Shepherd is manifested, ye shall receive the unfading crown of glory." In 2 Peter iii. 10-13 we read, in complete harmony with the Synoptist Gospels, that the "day of the Lord will come as a thief," bringing with it a dissolution of nature and new heavens and earth. These passages prove that the thought and phraseology of Paul were shared by the Galilean Apostles.

The harmonious testimony of these various and different witnesses affords complete proof, apart from any special authority of Holy Scripture, that Jesus of Nazareth announced that He will return visibly from heaven to earth to close the present order of things and to pronounce and execute judgment on all men good and bad; that He taught that at His coming evil will be prevalent on earth, and that, consequently, to some men His appearance will bring sudden destruction, but to the righteous deliverance and eternal blessing. The exact time of His return, Christ did not specify. But He spoke words which evoked in the hearts of some of His disciples a hope that some men then living would survive His coming. Paul, however, taught that the day of the Lord was not at hand, and that before Christ comes some new and terrible form of evil will first appear. That Christ left in the minds of some of His disciples this hope of an early return, and that He actually and conspicuously taught that He will come to close the present order of things and to judge all men living and dead, must be accepted, on reliable documentary evidence, as an assured result of New Testament scholarship.

LECTURE VI

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

WE turn now to a document which a confident and unanimous tradition of the early Christians, reaching back to the second century, attributes to an intimate associate of Christ. This important external evidence receives strong support from the contents of the Fourth Gospel. The whole evidence gives, in my view, reasonable certainty that we owe to the Apostle John the picture of Christ and account of His teaching therein found.

A very important statement of Christ about His return to judge the world is found in John v. 25-29.

We have here, with stately repetition, two parallel assertions marked by conspicuous points of similarity and difference. The former is introduced by an emphatic formula peculiar to, and very frequent in, the Fourth Gospel, "Verily, verily, I say to you." The latter assertion is designed to remove astonishment caused by the former: "marvel not at this, because," etc. Each assertion contains the solemn phrase, "there comes an hour;" found also in ch. iv. 21, 23, referring to the Gospel dispensation now close at hand, in ch. xvi. 2, referring to the future persecution of the servants of

Christ, in *v.* 25, referring to the fuller manifestation of Christ to His disciples, and in *v.* 32, referring to the dispersal of the disciples at the arrest of Christ. In the former of the two parallel assertions now before us, as in John iv. 23, our Lord adds, "and now is:" but in the second assertion these words are conspicuously absent. This difference marks an important distinction. Verse 25 describes the immediate effect of the preaching of Christ and the Apostles: *vv.* 28 and 29 refer to an event future even to us. In *v.* 24 Christ has already said that they who hear His word and believe in God who sent Him "have passed out of death into life." In the Gospel they have heard "the voice of the Son of God;" and it has given them "life." Their life is an outflow of the life which "the Father has in Himself," and which He has given to be in the Son. And, by raising into new life those who hear His voice and them only, the Son performs an act of "judgment." The solemn words, "an hour comes and now is," call attention to the new and important era in the spiritual life of men created by the Gospel of Christ.

The astonishment evoked by the announcement of the gift of life to those who hear His voice, Christ removes, or rather supersedes, by a still more astonishing announcement touching another "hour" which also "comes." Not only do the spiritually dead "now" hear the voice of Christ and rise into new life, but "an hour comes" in the future when "all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will go forth." No such universal statement as this is found in *v.* 25: for not

"*all*," even of those to whom it is preached, will listen to, and receive life from, the Gospel. On the other hand, we are not told that all who are in the graves, though all will hear the resurrection voice, "will *live*." All "will go forth" from their graves, some to "life," others to "judgment." This distinction is important, and is maintained throughout the New Testament. Although the word *life* is frequently used indiscriminately for bodily life of all kinds on earth, beyond the grave it is always reserved for a holy and blessed existence with God. Consequently, our Lord could not say that all who are in the graves "will live," even though all will leave their graves. For not all who do so will escape from death. "A resurrection of *life*" is the privilege only of "those who have done the good things."

In this great passage, Christ puts in close juxtaposition two very different resurrections, each ushered in by His own voice, a spiritual resurrection in which those who accept the Gospel enter at once into spiritual life, and a resurrection at the last day when all the bodies of men laid in the grave will go forth, to life or to judgment, according to their works.

In close agreement with the above, we read in John vi. 39, and again with emphatic repetition in *vv.* 40, 44, that "at the last day" Christ will raise those who now believe in Him and who thus have already eternal life. The same hope finds expression, from the lips of Martha, in ch. xi. 24. This mention of "the last day" carries forward the resurrection of the just to the close of the present order of things. It is in close agreement

with the mention by Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 52, of "the last trumpet."

The coming of Christ at the end of the age is mentioned in John xxi. 22, "if I will that he remain till I come," in language similar to that of the Synoptist Gospels and of Paul. That this was taken to mean "that that disciple does not die," implies that the Apostles understood the coming of Christ here mentioned to be the close of the present order of things, not the spiritual coming referred to in John xiv. 18.

Up to this point we have found complete agreement, in the matter before us, between the various writers of the New Testament and the various types of thought therein embodied. Paul teaches that at a voice from heaven the dead servants of Christ will rise, that all men will stand before Him in judgment, and that He will change the bodies of the just into the likeness of His own glorified body. The Synoptist Gospels represent Christ as teaching frequently that He will come from heaven with power and splendour and sit in judgment on the righteous and the wicked. And, in one great passage, Christ asserts that at His voice all the dead will rise and will receive according to their works.

Other teaching different from, yet closely related to, the above meets us in the discourses of Christ to the Apostles on the night of His betrayal. He says, as recorded in John xiv. 18-20, "I will not leave you orphans; I come to you. Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no more, but ye behold Me: because I live, also ye will live. In that day ye will know that

I am in My Father and ye in Me and I in you." Similarly, in ch. xvi. 16, "A little while and no longer ye behold Me, and again a little while and ye will see Me." Also *vv.* 22, 23: "Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice . . . and in that day ye shall ask Me nothing;" and *v.* 26, "in that day ye will ask in My name."

These words, in their full sense, refer evidently to the gift of the Spirit promised so conspicuously in chs. xiv. 16, 17, xvi. 13-15, immediately before the words quoted above. And they were abundantly fulfilled in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. On that day and in that Spirit Christ entered into a fellowship with His disciples far closer than that which they had enjoyed during His life on earth; and in this real and important sense He returned to them after the separation caused by His death. We have here an inward and spiritual coming of Christ. And, inasmuch as this closer union was conditioned by the resurrection of Christ, we may speak of the bodily return of the risen Lord to the disciples from whom He had been snatched by death as the beginning of this spiritual return. In other words, the fulfilment of the promise before us began in Christ's appearance to His disciples on the day of His resurrection; and was completed in the gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. To this latter refers probably the phrase "in that day." This spiritual return was a real anticipation of the bodily return for which His disciples were eagerly waiting.

In 1 John ii. 18 we read, "It is the last hour: and as ye have heard that Antichrist comes, even now are many antichrists arisen; whence we know that it is the last hour." The absence of the article twice, *ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν*, indicates that the present time is marked by the characteristics of "a last hour." The Christian dispensation, which in one sense is the beginning of a new and glorious era of eternal life, in another aspect is the last portion of the present order of things. The use of the word "hour" to describe so long a period of time warns us not to press its use elsewhere as indicating a short period. But we notice that the Gospel dispensation, however long, is in a measure homogeneous. During the whole of it, amid various developments, God is governing the world in the same method. The words "Antichrist comes" recall the teaching of Paul in 2 Thess. ii. 8: and the statement that "even now are many antichrists arisen" is in close agreement with the preceding verse, "the mystery of iniquity already works."

The scantiness of the teaching of the Fourth Gospel about the Second Coming of Christ, as compared with that of the Synoptist Gospels, stands related to the scantiness of such teaching in the second and third groups of the Epistles of Paul as compared with the first group. In each case, the development of church life and thought absorbed the writers' attention for other topics. But, though somewhat scanty, the teaching of the Fourth Gospel is in complete harmony with that of Paul and of the Synoptist Gospels.

LECTURE VII

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

WE turn now to a book differing widely, in thought and expression, from all else in the New Testament and occupying there a position something like that of the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament.

A tradition reaching back to the middle of the second century attributes the Book of Revelation to the Apostle John. So Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* ch. lxxxi.: "A teacher of ours, whose name was John, one of the twelve Apostles of Christ, foretold in a revelation which was made to him that those who believe in our Christ should pass a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that afterwards there should be a universal and, in a word, eternal resurrection of all men together, and then the judgment." On the other hand, wide differences both in phraseology and in modes of thought make very difficult, in spite of subtle links of connection, the supposition that both documents are from the same pen. To harmonise this conflicting external and internal evidence, lies beyond the scope of this volume. The quotation given above proves the very early date of the Book of Revelation. And this early date, taken in

connection with its contents, gives to it special value in our present research.

In Rev. i. 7, in close agreement with Dan. vii. 13, we read, "Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail before Him." Similarly in chs. iii. 11, xxii. 20 Christ says, "I come quickly;" adding in the latter passage, "and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." These are plain references to the return of Christ to judge the world.

In ch. ii. 5, we read, "but if not, I will come to thee and will remove thy lampstand out of its place, except thou repent." Similarly, *v.* 16, "repent; but if not, I come to thee quickly, and I will fight with thee with the sword of My mouth." Also ch. iii. 3, "if thou do not watch I will come as a thief, and thou wilt not know at what hour I will come to thee." These passages refer evidently to punishment inflicted, not at one definite moment at the close of the present order of things, but during the course of history. They thus stand related to the use of the term "day of the Lord" by the prophets of the Old Covenant to describe any conspicuous national punishment.

The word *quickly* (ταχύ) is found also, with conspicuous repetition, in Rev. iii. 11, xxii. 7, 12, 20: "I come quickly." The same thought finds expression in the introductory words in ch. i. 1, which are repeated word for word in ch. xxii. 6: "to show to His servants things which must needs take place *quickly*:" ἐν τάχει.

Also ch. i. 3: "the season is near." This conspicuous element of the Book of Revelation stands related to Matt. x. 23, xvi. 28 and other similar passages which assert or suggest an early return of Christ, and thus reveal an expectation not justified, in the form in which it was held, by subsequent events. This unfulfilled expectation presents a difficulty which I cannot remove. But it must not be allowed to invalidate the plain and abundant and harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament.

The first four seals, in Rev. vi. 1-8, open to us what seem to be consecutive historical pictures. At the fifth seal, in *vv.* 9-11, we pass within the veil and hear impatient voices of the souls of the martyrs. The sixth seal opens to us a vision of the dissolution of nature, and we hear the cry of the lost, who tell us that "the great day of their anger is come." This can be no other than a picture of the final judgment. It is followed in ch. vii. by a vision of the sealed ones, led about by the Lamb as their shepherd, when "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." At the seventh seal (ch. viii. 1) there is silence in heaven, marking a pause in the series of visions; and we see seven angels with seven trumpets.

With the trumpets begins another series of apparently consecutive visions. But this second series as a whole seems not to follow, but to run parallel with, the first series. For the total dissolution of nature under the sixth seal cannot be followed by the partial destruction described as occurring under the first four trumpets.

The second series, like the first, leads up to the great consummation. For at the seventh trumpet (Rev. xi. 15) we hear an announcement, "The kingdom of the world has become our Lord's and His Anointed's; and He shall reign for ever and ever." In ch. xiv. 14, we have a vision recalling that of Dan. vii. 13: "And I saw and beheld a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like a Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown and in His hand a sharp sickle." In ch. xvi. we have a third series, of bowls, evidently, like the seven trumpets, parallel to the seven seals and leading up to the great consummation. The consummation of judgment is delineated in chs. xvii. and xviii., where we have, in vivid picture, the destruction of a great hostile power, followed in ch. xix. 1-8 by the Hallelujahs of the saved.

From ch. xix. 11 to ch. xxi. 8 we have a series of visions, each introduced by the phrase "and I saw," in ch. xix. 11, 17, 19, xx. 1, 4, 11, xxi. 1; followed in ch. xxi. 9-27 and ch. xxii. 1-5 by visions of the heavenly Jerusalem and of the River of Life shown to the prophet by an angel. All these visions seem to be consecutive: and they lead up to the final glory.

The first vision, in ch. xix. 11-16, takes us back into the conflict, and shows us One seated on a white horse and leading forth to battle the armies of heaven. Before His advance fall the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire. The easiest explanation is that this picture delineates the struggle and victory and progress of the Gospel of Christ.

In ch. xx. 1, opens another vision, a sequel to those in ch. xix. 11-21. An angel descends from heaven, binds the serpent, and casts him into the abyss for a thousand years; after which long space of time he must needs be liberated for "a little time." The prophet adds, "and I saw thrones, and persons sat upon them, and judgment was given to them." He saw also "the souls of those who were beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God." It is not certain whether the words following, "such as did not worship the beast, neither his image," are a further description of the martyrs or describe another class of persons in addition to, or wider than, them, whom the prophet also saw, viz. the faithful servants of Christ. In the absence of decisive evidence, it is perhaps better to accept this latter wider interpretation. We are told that the persons referred to "lived," i.e. were alive when the prophet saw their souls, though some of them had been beheaded and all were undoubtedly dead; and that they "reigned with Christ a thousand years." But this does not imply that they began to live at the beginning of the thousand years; any more than it implies that they ceased to live and reign at its close. Satan was bound for a thousand years and then loosed; and during the whole of this time the prophet saw the souls of the martyrs and perhaps of other faithful servants of Christ living and reigning with their Lord. The thousand years note an extension, but not necessarily a limitation, of time.

"The rest of the dead did not live:" i.e. they had

not, as the martyrs had, a higher life which survived the death of the body. The words following, "until the thousand years were completed," do not assert or suggest that at the close of this long period they came to life. The assertion is purely negative. During the whole thousand years, while the servants of Christ lived and reigned with Him, the rest of mankind continued in a state of death. But we are not told either that they came to life, or that the saints ceased to live and reign, at the end of this period.

Verse 5b and *v.* 6 are a comment upon, and reveal the real significance of, the statement in *v.* 4. The words, "This is the First Resurrection," stand in marked contrast to "the Second Death;" and suggest another resurrection described in *vv.* 12, 13. This collocation of thought recalls John v. 25-29, already expounded, where the two resurrections are placed side by side. The life enjoyed by the saints reigning with Christ may well be described as a resurrection: for they were once "dead by reason of sins" and have been raised by the voice of Christ (John v. 25, Eph. ii. 5, 6) into new life. And, in contrast to the resurrection of the body "at the last day," it may correctly be called "the First Resurrection." They who experience this earlier and spiritual resurrection are "blessed and holy:" for to them the resurrection of the body will be a "resurrection of life," and they will thus escape "the Second Death."

The place in which the saints will live and reign with Christ is not mentioned. Nothing is said here

about their reigning on the earth; and the statement in Rev. v. 10, "they reign upon the earth," has no reference to the millennium. Christ now sits at the right hand of God: and, in the absence of other indication, we may assume that the "souls" of the martyrs, whom the prophet saw, reign with Him in heaven. Of their bodily resurrection and return to the earth, there is, in the passage before us, no hint.

In *v.* 7 we read, "when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be loosed from his prison, and will go forth to deceive the nations." Then follows the great apostasy. A vast multitude are gathered together to besiege the holy city: but fire fell from heaven and consumed them; and the Devil was cast into the lake of fire where were already the wild beast and the false prophet.

Then follows, in words recalling Dan. vii. 10, Matt. xxv. 31-46, the dissolution of nature and the final judgment: "And I saw a great white throne and Him sitting upon it, from whose face fled the earth and the heaven and place was not found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead in them; and each was judged according to their works." We have here indisputably the judgment of all men, good and bad, at the close of the present order of

things; already described in similar language by Paul, and by Christ as His words are recorded both in the Synoptist Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel.

If, as we have just seen, Rev. xx. 11-15 is a description of the final judgment, the apostasy described in *vv.* 8-10 is in close harmony with the teaching of Christ in Luke xvii. 26-30, where He compares His own second coming with the Flood and with the destruction of Sodom; and in still closer agreement with 2 Thess. ii. 3-12, where Paul teaches that the *παρουσία* of Christ will be preceded by the revelation and *παρουσία* of a new and terrible form of evil. Compare especially Rev. xx. 8, "he shall go forth to deceive the nations," with 2 Thess. ii. 9-11, "whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. . . . For this cause God sends them a working of error that they may believe a lie." In other words, the various writers of the New Testament agree to teach that Christ at His coming will find the world in deep sin; and that, to many who expect Him not, His coming will be sudden destruction.

The peculiarity of the passage before us is that it interposes between the time of writing and the final apostasy a period of a thousand years during which Satan is bound, while the martyrs and probably other dead servants of Christ live, and reign with Him; and that their life is described as the First Resurrection. This binding of Satan for a limited though long time, followed by liberation and renewed activity, is an

element not found elsewhere throughout the entire Bible. This being the case, it must be interpreted with utmost caution, and in the light of whatever teaching in the Bible most nearly approaches it.

The splendid visions of the prophets, e.g. the concluding chapters of the Book of Isaiah, do not help us much: for in them we have no hint of subsequent apostasy, and for the more part the language used excludes the possibility of apostasy. The nearest parallel, in the prophets, to the passage before us, is to be found in Ezek. xxxvii.-xxxix. The vision opens in a valley of dry bones. At the voice of the prophet, breath entered into them, and the dead woke up into new life. This is explained to be a prophecy of national revival. And with the revived nation God makes a covenant of peace. Then comes an onslaught of distant Gentile nations led by "Gog, of the land of Magog." From this tremendous attack Israel is rescued by fire from heaven, and Gog and his multitude suffer complete destruction. Lastly follows a picture of the restored temple and worship and of Israel dwelling safely in its own land. The closeness of the parallel leaves little room for doubt that these chapters of Ezekiel were before the mind of the writer of the Book of Revelation. Unfortunately, they shed little light on the passage before us. But, that national revival is depicted as a waking up of dead bones into life, is in complete harmony with the spiritual meaning given above to "the First Resurrection."

The nearest and most instructive parallel is found in

John v. 25-29, already expounded. For we have here two distinct resurrections, one present and spiritual, the other future and bodily, the one partial and the other universal. Similarly, in Eph. ii. 5, 6 Paul speaks of some who had been "dead" in consequence of their sins as already made alive and raised to sit with Christ in heavenly places. This teaching of Paul and of the Fourth Gospel contains all that is implied in the phraseology of Rev. xx. 4, 6. For, certainly, those who have heard "the voice of the Son of God," and have thus "passed out of death into life," and whom God has "made alive with Christ" and "made to sit in the heavenly places in Christ," have experienced what may be called, in contrast to the final consummation, "the First Resurrection."

Of the binding of Satan for a long but limited time, to be again liberated for a short time, I can give no explanation fully satisfactory. But the binding must be a limitation, by supernatural power, of the activity of the great enemy of God and man. It follows the final overthrow of other hostile powers. But we have no indication that it will take place visibly before the eyes of men; or that it will interfere with the ordinary course of nature, as will the judgment described in Rev. xx. 11. Still less have we proof that the binding of Satan will banish evil from the earth. Had this been so, for so long a time, he would not, on his return, have so quickly roused the nations to rebellion. The passage is most easily explained as announcing that the earlier victories of the Gospel will

be followed by a removal, through an extraordinary manifestation of divine power, of the hindrances which the god of this world has been permitted to put in the way of its further progress.

The above exposition is all that is demanded and justified by the grammatical meaning of the words used in Rev. xx. 1-10. And it permits us to understand in its natural grammatical meaning the abundant and harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament. To some, it will seem to fall below the full meaning of the strong words used in the passage before us. But to these words we cannot give a stronger meaning without doing violence to much more abundant and plain teaching elsewhere.

If this exposition be correct, we may look upon the progress of the Gospel during the last eighteen centuries as a victorious war carried on by Christ against the powers of evil which resist the advance of His Kingdom; and we may expect still further progress. We may expect that the great forces which still oppose the work of God will be broken, and that the power for evil of the great spiritual enemy will be conspicuously limited for a long period. During this long period of spiritual peace and progress on earth, they who in loyalty to Christ have laid down their lives, and all who after faithful service have passed away from earth, are living and reigning with Christ within the veil, enjoying already a life which is an anticipation of their final reward. Strange to say, this long period of peace and progress will be followed, in the mysterious purpose

or permission of God, by a liberation of the evil powers which for a long time have been bound; and by a consequent wide-spread revolt against God and His faithful ones. But this last uprising of evil will be short. The supernatural power which has already given to the Gospel its earlier victories will be again still more conspicuously put forth, and the power of evil be broken for ever. Then follows the great assize, the punishment of the wicked, and the New Earth and Heaven in which the saved will dwell with Christ.

From the above is evident that the writer of the Book of Revelation accepts to the full the harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the present order of things; and adds to it an important element touching the progress of the Kingdom of Christ before His return to judge the world.

LECTURE VIII

MILLENARIANISM

IN the foregoing lectures, by comparison of the various types of primitive eschatological teaching embodied in the New Testament, we have found complete historical proof that the early followers of Christ were looking forward to a definite moment when, unexpectedly, suddenly, audibly, and visibly Christ will return in bodily form from heaven to earth, to wake up the dead, to change the living servants of Christ, to judge all men, and to bring in the everlasting glory. In this confident and definite expectation, we found complete agreement between the Epistles of Paul, the Synoptist Gospels, the Fourth Gospel, and the Catholic Epistles. The same expectation finds expression also in the Book of Revelation. These various writers also teach that at the coming of Christ evil will be in power. And Paul teaches expressly that the appearance of Christ will be preceded by appearance of a new and terrible form of evil, an outward and conspicuous manifestation of evil influences already more or less secretly operating upon men; and that this evil power will be brought to nought by the brightness of the appearance of Christ.

The Book of Revelation, however, differs from all the rest of the Bible by depicting, before the last apostasy, an earlier and overwhelming defeat of the hostile powers, lasting in its effects for a thousand years. In other words, the Book of Revelation teaches two interpositions of supernatural power, each overturning, one for a time, the other finally, the enemies of God and man. The relation of these two victories of good over evil to the Second Coming of Christ so frequently announced in the New Testament demands now further inquiry.

In Lect. VII. we interpreted the vision of Christ on "a great white throne," depicted in Rev. xx. 11, as identical with the sudden and audible and visible and bodily return of Christ so frequently announced in the other books of the New Testament and indeed in Rev. i. 7, xxii. 12, 20. In opposition to this interpretation, the school of thought commonly known as MILLENARIAN identifies the coming of Christ for which the early Christians were waiting with the vision of Christ on a white horse depicted in Rev. xix. 11. The question thus raised must be answered by a comparison of the two visions and of the events following them with the harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament.

The very close similarity in thought and phrase between Rev. xx. 11-15 and Matt. xxv. 31-46 at once attracts attention. In each account, Christ sits upon a throne, and all mankind stand before Him and are judged by Him according to their works. In exact agreement with these passages is John v. 28, 29, where

at the bidding of Christ all the dead leave their graves and go forth to life or to judgment according as they have done things good or bad. Very similar also is 2 Thess. i. 6-10, where we read that Christ at His revelation from heaven will give relief to His servants but eternal destruction to those who obey not the Gospel. This similarity is a strong presumption that these four passages refer to the same solemn event.

On the other hand, the vision of Christ in Rev. xix. 11-16 and the events portrayed in *vv.* 17-21 present not nearly so many points of coincidence with the teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ. For nowhere else is Christ's coming represented as that of a soldier armed for fight; nor is the destruction which follows His coming represented as a military overthrow. He comes, not as a soldier for the fight, but as a judge supported by irresistible power.

The vision of the throne and of Him from whose face fled both earth and heaven is in complete harmony with the suddenness of the coming of Christ as asserted in 1 Cor. xv. 52, "in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet," and as implied in the comparison with a flash of lightning in Matt. xxiv. 27, and with a thief in *v.* 43 and in 1 Thess. v. 4. But this idea of suddenness is quite alien to the picture in Rev. xix. 11-21 of a hero going forth to fight followed by an army, of a summons to the birds to come and eat the bodies of those who will be slain, and of hostile armies prepared for war.

This close similarity of the one passage, and dissimilarity of the other, to the teaching of the rest of the New Testament affords strong support to the exposition given in my last lecture, and is a serious objection to the Millenarian theory.

This preliminary judgment is confirmed by insuperable difficulties involved in the supposition that the coming of Christ for which the early Christians were waiting will be followed by the Millennium and Apostasy described in Rev. xx. 1-9. This will appear if we pursue this supposition to its consequences, taking into our account the indisputable teaching of other parts of the New Testament.

We must conceive the world going on in its usual course, and evil in great power. In a moment, as we have already learnt, a voice from heaven is heard, and Christ appears. At that voice, and to meet their appearing Lord, the murdered servants of Christ wake up from the sleep of death. But not these only. For we cannot conceive this marked honour given only to those who have actually shed their blood for Christ when so many others, e.g. Wycliffe and Luther, were equally faithful and equally ready to die for Him. If there be, before the Millennium, a bodily resurrection, it must be shared by all the faithful and departed servants of Christ. And along with these risen ones, we must conceive, according to the plain teaching of 1 Cor. xv. 52, 1 Thess. iv. 16, that the righteous then living will be changed and caught up to meet Christ What about the living children of living believers?

Infants, we may suppose, will be caught up with their parents. But what about those in their teens? Surely there will be a selection, the good ones taken and the bad ones left behind along with those who, not being servants of Christ, will have no part in the resurrection which will immediately follow the voice and appearance of Christ.

What becomes of the adult unsaved ones? Are we to suppose that they will continue on earth, eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, in successive generations? And what will be the moral state of mankind when the salt of the earth and the light of the world are removed? It might be thought that it will become a pandemonium. We must however remember that at the beginning of the Millennium the prince of darkness has been bound. But unfortunately there are no servants of Christ left on earth to take advantage of this removal of the great enemy of God and man and to preach to the wicked a Gospel of repentance. And of any general turning to God we have no hint in Rev. xx. 1-6, the only passage in the whole Bible which speaks about the Millennium.

Let us now try to follow, on the supposition before us, the risen servants of Christ. Their bodily resurrection, and such is expressly mentioned in 1 Cor xv. 23, 35, 44 as following at once the coming of Christ, implies a definite place. Where are they? Not on earth. For this is still occupied by the unsaved, who were not caught up to meet Christ. And we cannot conceive mingled together on the same planet some

who have yet to die and others who have passed through death and will die no more. Such confusion of the present age with the age to come is in the last degree unlikely. If not on earth, are we to suppose them to be somewhere between earth and heaven, visible to the wicked still living and dying on earth? This suggestion would so completely change the conditions of human probationary life on earth as to make its continuance utterly incomprehensible. Or are we to suppose that the risen ones and the changed survivors will suddenly vanish from earth into the unseen world, in some such way as the ascending body of Christ vanished from His disciples' view? In this case, the Second Coming of Christ would be a voice and appearance of Christ from heaven, heard and seen (Rev. i. 7) by all men, yet followed by His disappearance and the disappearance of all the good people then living on earth. Of such disappearance of Christ after His return, we have no hint in the New Testament; and it contradicts the whole tenor of its teaching on this subject.

Touching the condition of the world during the Millennium, the supposition we are considering leaves us in utter perplexity. The naughty children of pious and living parents have been left to the mercy of a race from which all the righteous have been taken away. Satan is bound. But, unless the risen ones are sent to proclaim the Gospel to the unsaved, there are none to teach them. The only favourable information we have about the world is that at the close of the

Millennium it contains (Rev. xx. 9) "a camp of the saints."

After a long period, described as "a thousand years," during which Satan is bound, he is liberated, and returns to the earth. He is welcomed by a host as numerous "as the sand of the sea," who follow him to make war against the people of God. This quick and great apostasy proves that the Millennium is no triumphant and universal reign of righteousness. And it disproves the supposition that during the thousand years Christ is reigning visibly on earth. For we cannot conceive such revolt in His visible presence; nor can we conceive that at the release of Satan Christ will retreat, even for a short time, from the realm over which He has reigned so long. In any case, the triumph of Satan is short. Fire falls suddenly from heaven, a great throne appears, the books are opened, and all men, good and bad, are judged according to their works.

The above difficulties and contradictions are serious objections to the hypothesis which involves them.

The theory of a pre-millennial advent of Christ lies open to other insuperable objections. Our Lord asserts clearly in Matt. xxiv. 29, Mark xiii. 24, 25, that at His return the sun and moon will cease to shine and the stars fall from heaven. This implies a dissolution of nature. A still more graphic picture of this dissolution is given in Rev. vi. 12-17, as heralding the great day of the anger of God. Scarcely less graphic is the picture given in Rev. xx. 11,

"from whose face fled the earth and the heaven, and place was not found for them." Now the dissolution of nature described in this last passage evidently follows the Millennium. For it is impossible to separate the vision in Rev. xx. 11 from the apostasy immediately preceding it; and this is said expressly in *v.* 7 to follow the Millennium. In other words, the Book of Revelation announces a dissolution of nature following the Millennium. Our Lord announced, as we have seen, a similar dissolution to accompany His Second Coming. If, then, this coming precedes the Millennium, there will be two dissolutions of nature, separated by more than a thousand years; and, between these two catastrophes, a tremendous assault by a great multitude of followers of Satan against the servants of God.

Still further difficulties surround the theory before us. In Matt. xxv. 31-46 we read, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon the throne of His glory, and there will be gathered together before Him all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Our Lord concludes by announcing that those on His left hand "will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Indisputably, the words, "when the Son of Man comes," refer to that one definite coming of which Christ spoke so much. This is placed beyond doubt by the complete harmony of all that Christ says about this great event, which was ever in His thoughts. If, then, Christ's return is to be followed

by the Millennium described in Rev. xx. 1-6, we must suppose that after this solemn separation the goats will again break in upon the sheep with the terrible assault depicted in *v.* 9 as following the Millennium. This is inconceivable.

Other difficulties remain. Our Lord announces in John v. 28, 29 that "an hour comes in which all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will go forth, they that have done the good things to a resurrection of life, and they that have done the evil things to a resurrection of judgment." This announcement is in close accord with Rev. xx. 13-15, where we read, "The sea gave up the dead in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead in them; and they were judged, each according to their works. . . . And if any one was not found written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Each of these passages suggests irresistibly one universal resurrection and judgment. The theory we are discussing requires us to believe that there will be, in addition to the spiritual resurrection referred to in John v. 25, Eph. ii. 6, within the "hour" of which Christ speaks, two bodily resurrections separated by more than a thousand years, one of the righteous only, the other of righteous and wicked.

One more objection here demands notice. In John vi. 39, 40, 44, Christ announces that He will raise His people "on the last day." The same hope is expressed by Martha in ch. xi. 24. It is altogether incongruous to include in "the last day" events sc

dissimilar as the resurrection of the righteous, the thousand years' bondage of Satan, his release, the assault of Gog and Magog and its overthrow, and the final judgment. Similarly, in 1 Cor. xv. 52, Paul speaks of the voice which will awake the dead servants of Christ, and change the living, including himself and his readers, as "the last trumpet." Now, if the righteous are to be raised before the Millennium and the wicked after it, there will be two resurrections; and, since the wicked are to be summoned to judgment by the voice of Christ, this voice must be the last trumpet, and the earlier voice, which will summon those to whom Paul refers in 1 Cor. xv. 52, cannot be so described. It will be not the last trumpet, but perhaps the last but one.

Such are the many insuperable difficulties surrounding the hypothesis of a pre-millennial advent of Christ. It breaks up the one definite coming for which His disciples were waiting into two comings separated by more than a thousand years, each heralded by a trumpet voice and followed by a resurrection of the dead and a dissolution of nature. The period between these two comings and trumpets and resurrections is left in inextricable confusion, and concludes with a tremendous assault of the evil against the good.

We now ask, What evidence can be brought in favour of the hypothesis before us, to set against the above insuperable objections? No direct evidence. For throughout the New Testament we find no hint of two bodily comings of Christ and of two bodily resur-

rections, which are essential elements of the Millenarian theory. Only one argument in its support seems to me worthy of consideration.

The most serious, and the only serious, objections to the interpretation here advocated are that throughout the New Testament, outside Rev. xx. 1-10, we have no hint of a long period of spiritual prosperity preceding the coming of Christ; and that such long period of prosperity is inconsistent with the hope of an early return of Christ cherished by some of His early followers. The absence of any trace of the Millennium between the confusion described in Matt. xxiv. 21-28 and *vv.* 29-31 is certainly remarkable. Still more so is the absence of any reference to it in 2 Thess. ii. 1-12, where Paul is warning his readers that the day of Christ is not at hand by saying that, before Christ comes, the Man of Sin must first come. It may not unfairly be argued that, had he known of a long period of blessing before the coming of Christ, he would have mentioned it as another proof that the day of Christ was not near. The various indications, noted on pp. 34, 44, 62, of expectation of an early return of Christ are also inconsistent with expectation of a millennium of blessing before the coming of Christ.

To this serious objection, I have no complete answer. But this objection seems to me much less serious than is the insuperable difficulty, or impossibility, of placing the final apostasy, which is to follow the Millennium, after the judgment described in Matt. xxv. 30-46, John v. 28, 29. Moreover, this objection is based only on ten verses,

Rev. xx. 1-10, of the most obscure book of the New Testament. It seems to me safer to interpret this one passage in the light of the harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament than to throw into confusion the teaching of the entire New Testament in deference to this one passage.

That an earlier resurrection of the righteous is not asserted or suggested in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 1 Cor. xv. 23, I have already proved in Lect. IV. That the vision of Christ on a white horse, and "the First Resurrection," do not necessarily involve a visible interruption of the course of nature, I have shown in Lect. VII. These cannot therefore be brought as serious objections to the interpretation here advocated.

Such is the scanty evidence on which rests the unlikely supposition of two Last Trumpets, of two Comings of Christ, of two bodily Resurrections, and of two Dissolutions of Nature. In other words, we are asked to modify and transform the abundant, and various, and harmonious teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ in deference to an exposition of a few verses of the most mysterious and difficult book in the Bible. Even if this exposition were indisputable, we might fairly ask whether it is safe to throw into confusion, for such a reason, the plain teaching of the rest of the New Testament. But the exposition which is made to bear the burden of issues so great is far from certain, or rather, is in itself improbable; and, as we have seen, another exposition involving no such confusion is at once suggested by

the plain meaning of the words used in the passage in question.

It is no part of my present task to explain as a whole the imagery of the very difficult Book of Revelation. But, indisputably, many of its pictures must have a purely spiritual meaning, i.e. they must depict conditions and events which exist and take place only in the spiritual word, apart from any visible disturbance of the course of external nature. As examples, I must quote the first five seals in Rev. vi. 1-11. On the other hand, the sixth seal, in *vv.* 12-17, evidently breaks through the veil and describes, in such symbolic form as men on earth can understand, events which will visibly set aside the ordinary course of nature. This intermingling of the unseen and the seen, often without indication of the transition, warns us to use special caution in expounding the pictures of this mysterious book. The only safe rule is to interpret the pictures in the light of the plain teaching of the rest of the New Testament. The theory before us reverses this method, and sets aside the plain meaning of plain statements in deference to an interpretation of one series of difficult metaphors.

The pictures of Christ coming on a white horse, of the angel in the sun calling the birds to feast on the victims about to be slain, of the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies marching to battle, of the angel with a chain binding Satan, have very little in common with the metaphors used to describe the coming of Christ to judgment. And they certainly cannot be interpreted literally. They are therefore a

very unsafe foundation on which to build an important doctrine. Moreover, we have no hint that "the souls" of the martyrs who lived and reigned with Christ had experienced a bodily resurrection. In Rev. vi. 9-11, we have another vision of martyred "souls" who are bidden to wait until their brethren, like themselves, have been slain. These impatient souls cannot have entered into the consummation involved in the resurrection of the body. Moreover, that in John v. 25-29 we read of two resurrections in close juxtaposition, one spiritual and the other bodily, and that Paul taught frequently that believers are already risen with Christ, warns us not hastily to assume that "the First Resurrection" must necessarily be a resurrection of the body. In short, the exposition upon which is built the doctrine of the pre-millennial advent of Christ has no foundation in sound exegesis of the New Testament. It may therefore be dismissed as having no place in the Gospel of Christ.

The doctrine I have endeavoured to overturn owes its acceptance by not a few sincere and earnest Christians to a natural rebound from another doctrine still further removed from the teaching of the New Testament, yet prevalent in some circles of religious activity. The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, which moulded the entire thought of His early followers, has been practically ignored by many modern Christians. An indefinite idea has silently grown up among them that the departed servants of Christ go at death to their full and final reward, and that the Gospel will make progress

among men until, by its instrumentality, the whole world and all human hearts are brought to bow in unreserved homage to Christ. These doctrines leave no place for His bodily return to earth. For His dead servants have already attained their full consummation, and the whole purpose of God touching His Kingdom among men will be accomplished in the ordinary course of the Gospel of Christ. They who hold this view say little or nothing about the Second Coming of Christ. It lies outside their spiritual horizon. That which to the early Christians was so much, is nothing to them. Against this oversight of so large an element of the teaching of the New Testament, the doctrine which in this lecture I have combated is an extreme revolt. And many sympathise with the revolt because they know enough of the New Testament to condemn the loose theology just mentioned. Unfortunately, by taking up a theory which breaks down under the weight of its own absurdity, they do something indirectly to strengthen the belief which they reject. The only safe remedy is to reinstate, by careful exegesis, the actual teaching of the New Testament.

Closely connected with the doctrine of the pre-millennial Advent is the question of the time of Christ's return. Most of its advocates expect an early return, almost at any hour. Such early return, they who reject this doctrine cannot expect. For, whatever they may think about the Millennium, to them Paul's warning to the Thessalonican Christians that the day of the

Lord was not close at hand, is still valid. He taught plainly, in 2 Thess. ii. 3-12, that Christ will not come until first have come a new and terrible form of evil. In his day, all this was quite consistent with an expectation that Christ might return during the lifetime of men then living. For so rapid had been the recent development of the Kingdom of God that a single lifetime seemed sufficient for the appearance of the Man of Sin, and for his destruction by the visible return of Christ. Such rapid development we cannot expect now. During eighteen centuries no new form of evil has appeared, nothing which can for a moment be identified with the great enemy about whom Paul wrote. And the analogy of these centuries makes an early and sudden appearance most unlikely. Moreover the present age, and those preceding it, have been times of spiritual progress; and the spiritual forces at work for good in the world bear no marks of exhaustion. We cannot conceive that this progress, wrought by God through ordinary instruments, will be interrupted by the hand of God. The time of Christ's return must be one of spiritual stagnation and retrogression. Consequently, assured as we are that a moment will come when unexpectedly Christ will lay His hand upon the wheels of time and stop them for ever, and sweep away the platform on which they have revolved so long, and build upon its ruins a New Earth and Heaven, we cannot expect this longed-for consummation in our own lifetime. Weary as we are with happy toil, we cannot doubt that we shall lay us down for our

last sleep in His arms till the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

For a notice of a modern defence of *Millenarianism*, see Note A. For another theory about the Second Coming of Christ, see Notes B, C, D; and for another theory of the Millennium, see Note E.

LECTURE IX

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

THE practical agreement of the various and very different writers of the New Testament is, apart from any special infallibility or authority of Holy Scripture, complete historical proof that the Founder of Christianity left upon the minds of His immediate followers a firm conviction that in visible form He will return from heaven to earth to close the present order of things, to raise the dead, to judge all men, and to bring in the everlasting glory. Now it is in the last degree unlikely that in this important matter all the early followers of Christ, the men who won for Him the homage of all future generations and through whose agency He became the Saviour of the world, were in serious error touching the teaching of their Master. The unlikeliness of this alternative compels us to believe that the unanimous conviction of His followers was a correct re-echo of the actual teaching of Christ. And whatever He announced, we cannot doubt that He will perform.

At this point a warning is needful. That the doctrine

which we have now traced to the lips of Christ pertains to the future, demands, in our interpretation of it, the utmost caution. The fulfilment, in Christ and Christianity, of the ancient prophecies given to Israel differs greatly both from the expectations roused and from the letter of the prophecies. Doubtless it will be so in the Second Coming of Christ. All we can expect with confidence is that, in the latter as in the former, the realisation will, in all real worth, surpass the letter of the promise. Touching the return of Christ, we expect such a fulfilment as might be most suitably foretold to men in the form we find in the New Testament.

Evidently the Apostles and Evangelists expected that the spirits of the dead will robe themselves again in material forms, although apparently in forms not subject to the conditions of animal life. Such seems to have been, as they conceived it, the body of the Risen Lord which they saw taken up into heaven. We therefore infer that they expected, not only a visible, but a bodily, return of Christ. And certainly they expected that His return will completely transform the material universe. In our ignorance of the essential nature of matter, we have no sufficient reasons for contradicting this confident expectation. The teaching of the New Testament implies, I think, that the contrast of spirit and body, which is co-extensive with rational life on earth, will have its place in the final consummation.

We now ask, What bearing has the teaching which in this volume we have traced to the lips of Christ upon the spiritual life of our own day? Is it to us merely

a matter of antiquarian interest, or is it, or may it be, amid the progress of modern thought, helpful to the spiritual life of the servants of Christ?

It may be at once admitted that the doctrine before us cannot occupy in our thought the place it filled in the minds of the first generation of Christians. Indeed, it does not occupy in the longer and more mature epistles of Paul the position it holds in his two earliest letters. In the systematic exposition of the Gospel given in the Epistle to the Romans, it receives only slight mention, and has no place in the main argument. So also in the sublime Epistle to the Ephesians. In the Fourth Gospel, which contains the fullest development in the New Testament of the doctrine of the Son of God, it is not conspicuous. Important as it is, the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ cannot be placed on a level, as a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, with the superhuman dignity of Christ, His resurrection from the dead, the pardon of sins through faith in Him and through His death for the sins of men, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to be, in the servants of Christ, the inward source of a new life. It is, however, an integral part, in the second rank of importance, of the Gospel of Christ.

In our search for the reality underlying this teaching, we may learn something from 2 Thess. i. 7, and 1 Cor. i. 7, where the return for which His followers were waiting is described as "the revelation (or unveiling) of the Lord Jesus." In other words, the veil which now hides from mortal view the eternal realities will in that day be raised

or rent. In this rent veil we have a definite conception of the Coming of Christ. It will be a bursting in, upon the visible universe, of the great Invisible beyond and above it, in order that the Invisible may transform and glorify the visible.

This expectation of a bursting in of the Unseen implies, and is the strongest conceivable expression of, a conviction that behind and beyond and above the visible universe is a greater world unseen. Upon this conviction rests the Christian hope and all religious life.

On every side we see a universe of apparently unlimited extent. And it seems to be as durable as it is firm and broad. Indeed the planets in their orbits and the so-called fixed stars in their scarcely perceptible movements seem to be a visible embodiment of eternity itself. In contrast to the solid earth on which we tread, with firm but passing steps, and the starry heavens above our heads, we seem to be butterflies of a summer or like leaves of the forest opening in the bright green springtime only to pass away in the decay of autumn.

To assert, as is implied in the teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ, that an hour will strike in which the visible universe, whose age reaches back through unnumbered millenniums, will pass away, is to assert the existence of something greater and older and more durable than the solid earth, on which so many generations of men have lived and died, and all that belongs to it; and of forces or a Power controlling the natural forces which seem to control irresistibly all human life. In other words, a belief in

the Second Coming of Christ is the strongest possible contradiction to the Materialism which asserts or suggests that the things which are seen and the forces observed operating in them are the only matters certainly known to man.

The teaching of Christ that the visible universe will not abide for ever has received remarkable confirmation in our own day from Natural Science. All modern research teaches that the material universe is tending towards a state in which life will be impossible, that the forces of nature are carrying it irresistibly forward to the silence of death. In this, as in other respects, the life of an individual is an epitome of the life of the race and of the world.

Beyond that silence and quiescence, Natural Science can see nothing. Herbert Spencer timidly suggests (*First Principles* pp. 529-537) that possibly the forces which are destroying the universe will, by some reverse action, bring it back to life. But, for this suggestion, he has no proof or presumption to bring. It is a mere hope for which Science finds no foundation, suggested as a disguise to hide the eternal night which is all that Natural Science can foretell.

Christ taught, not only that the present universe is passing away, but that, just as it has its source in an Unseen greater than itself, by which it is controlled, so it will be succeeded by another world far greater than that which we see around us, and destined to abide for ever. He taught that the solid earth beneath us is but a temporary platform for the passing drama of man's

probation, and that when the drama is over the platform erected for it will be removed, to give place to the abiding reality for which that drama is the preparation. This teaching is the only explanation of the present material universe, apparently so durable yet manifestly doomed to pass away; and of human life upon it, apparently so transitory and yet of so much greater value than its material environment.

We now see that the Second Coming of Christ, as taught by Himself, is the strongest possible assertion that the material and visible, though apparently so important and so stable, are actually subordinate and transitory; and that the spiritual, apparently so intangible and transitory, is the enduring and the real. In no other form could this great truth, which underlies all religion and all the highest morality, have been so clearly and so forcefully stated as in the teaching which in these lectures we have traced to the lips of the Great Teacher who has remoulded for good the thought and life of man.

The return of Christ depicted in the New Testament will be a complete and abiding victory and dominion of mind over matter. In this life, matter fetters mind in a thousand ways. The necessities of bodily life compel us to spend time in more or less degrading toil. Physical causes produce pain, and thus hinder mental effort. The intelligence of man is held down in its upward flight by its material environment. Now Paul teaches expressly, in 1 Cor. xv. 35, 44, that the risen servants of Christ will have bodies. This can

only mean that at His return their disembodied spirits will again clothe themselves in material forms. But, whereas their present bodies are "psychical," or "animal," which I understand to mean that they are governed by the laws of animal life, their risen bodies will be "spiritual," i.e. controlled altogether by the intelligent spirit within. At present the nobler element in man is fettered, and in large measure controlled, by the lower. The teaching of Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 44-46 asserts that this inversion is only transitory and preparatory, and that in the great consummation the element which is essentially higher will rule and that which is lower will receive its highest possible dignity by becoming the submissive organ of that which is greater than itself.

Still more conspicuously will the Coming of Christ be the absolute and eternal victory of good over evil. In the present order of things, not unfrequently evil seems to trample under foot the good. The wicked flourish, and for a long time. The righteous suffer, and sometimes lose life itself because they are good and others around are bad. But the majesty of the Moral Sense of Man, which speaks with an authority we cannot gainsay, assures us that this triumph cannot last. Indeed the moral incongruity of this occasional triumph demands a conspicuous and universally recognised vindication of the majesty of Right. All this prepares us to expect an exact and eternal retribution for all actions good and bad. Moreover, so closely interwoven is human action with its material environ-

ment, nearer and more remote, and so closely related is the imperfection of present retribution to its present imperfect environment, that we wonder not that the perfect retribution will be accompanied by a new and perfect material environment. Only in a New Earth and Heaven, and in bodies raised from the dead to die no more, will every one receive according as his work has been.

The resurrection of the body will be a complete and permanent realisation of the creative purpose of God. He made man spirit and body, in order that the spirit might rule the body and make it the organ of the spirit's self-manifestation, and in order that thus both spirit and body might attain their highest well-being. This purpose and this order were disturbed and for a time frustrated by sin. The body threw off the yoke of the spirit within; and, the original purpose being inverted, both spirit and body sank into discord and bondage. But, that He might restore the order thus disturbed, the Eternal Son, Himself the Archetype of all created intelligence, entered into human flesh and became Man. In those who receive Him, He at once rescues the spirit, in some measure, from bondage to its material environment, nearer and more remote. But the rescue is only partial. Christ will come again to redeem even the bodies of His people, and, as Paul believed, (see Rom. viii. 19-23,) their further material environment, from the bondage of decay. He will thus, by restoring the normal relation of spirit to body and of man to his entire material environment, achieve

the purpose for which man and the universe were created.

This victory of mind over matter and of good over evil, and this accomplishment of the creative purpose of God, can be brought about only by some such event as a resurrection of the dead and a renovation of the material universe. It cannot be accomplished by the hand of death. For death sunders that which God created to be closely interwoven. It is a victory of matter over mind, of evil over good. Lips which spoke for Christ are silent in the grave, silent in some cases because they spoke so bravely and so well. The fugitive spirits of His servants have been driven naked from the bodies and from the world in which they once served Him. This cannot be for ever. The fugitives must return and claim their own. The world must receive back those whom it once disowned. And all this can be done only by some such dissolution and renovation of nature and resurrection of the dead as is described in the New Testament.

The relation between our present and future bodies, and between the material universe around us now and that new order of things which will abide for ever, is beyond our conception, and need not trouble us. For in our present bodies is a constant flux of particles; which however does not destroy or weaken their continuity. It matters not whether the risen and glorified bodies will, or will not, contain a single particle present in the bodies laid in the grave. The essential point is that the spirits driven forth by death from the material

forms in which they lived and served God and from the visible universe will survive that universe and will robe themselves again in material forms. At the same time, a wide and deep analogy seems to suggest a real, though to us utterly inconceivable, continuity or relation between the present battlefield and the scene of the final triumph, and between the bodies once devoted on earth to the service of Christ and those on whose brows will rest the unfading crown.

The hope of a bodily resurrection and of a new earth and heaven gives dignity and worth to matter. For it implies that matter, be it what it may, is not a passing, but an abiding, companion of mind. And this abiding union is suggested irresistibly by the very intimate relation now existing. It is meet, as is suggested in Phil. iii. 21, that the bodies which have been obedient organs of the spirit should share its redemption and glory. But in what sense or measure this is possible, we know not.

That this victory of mind over matter, of good over evil, and this complete realisation of the purpose for which man was created, are connected with Christ, and with His bodily return to earth, need not surprise us. For the incarnation of the Creator Son gave to matter a new and infinite dignity. Moreover, in that sacred human body evil achieved its most terrible victory over good, and matter inflicted on mind its deepest humiliation. In some measure that victory was reversed at the resurrection of Christ. He then triumphantly rescued from the grave the body which had been the

victim of death's triumph. But the triumph of Christ was incomplete. The Creator had entered, in human form, a revolted province in order to bring it back to His peaceful and blessed sway. Without having done this, He returned from a world which had rejected Him. But He took with Him into the unseen world a handful of human dust; and placed it upon the throne of heaven. He thus severed that which was designed to be one; and took from the material universe its most highly honoured part.

Earth claims back that handful of dust; or rather the handful of dust claims the world of which once it was a part. The separation cannot be abiding. He who, after being driven from earth by man's deepest sin, returned into the body once nailed to the cross will return again, bringing back the handful of dust from heaven to earth, in order that its touch may raise earth to heaven.

Since the dead servants of Christ were on earth, and now are, in His nearer presence, vitally united to Him, we wonder not that their departed spirits will accompany their returning Lord. Since they were created body and spirit, we wonder not that they, like their Lord ages ago, will robe themselves again in material forms. And since, both as Creator and Redeemer, Christ claims the homage and obedience of all His rational creatures, we wonder not that at His return He will sit in judgment on all men living and dead.

Thus in Christ and by His return from heaven to earth will be accomplished fully the purpose for which

the world and man were created. Its orderly accomplishment was disturbed by sin ; and this disturbance could be removed only by the suffering and death of the Incarnate Son, Himself the Agent of creation. A pledge of the accomplishment was given in the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of the Crucified. His return to earth will bring the full realisation of the entire purpose of God.

The long waiting of the departed for their full reward need not perplex us. To the Unseen we cannot apply notions of time and delay derived from the present life. Suffice for us that the righteous dead are already resting with Christ from the toil and conflict of earth ; and that in His good time they and we together shall enter the glory which in that day will be revealed.

For that day we wait. Not the death of the body, which is a penalty of sin and a victory of the powers of darkness, but the return of Christ in bodily form to reign over His faithful ones, their own bodies rescued from death and the grave, is the aim and goal of our exultant hope. For that return His early followers eagerly waited. And their eager hope suggested that perhaps they might hear His voice and see His face without passing under the dark shadow of death. That expectation was not fulfilled. And we cannot share it. But, long as the time seems, that day will come. Had we witnessed the creation of matter, and known that long ages were predestined to elapse before rational man would stand on the earth, our expectation would have wearied at the long delay. But those long

ages rolled by ; and for thousands of years our planet has teemed with rational life. So will pass by whatever ages remain before our Lord's return. Many reasons suggest that, though not close at hand, it cannot be very long delayed. Doubtless we shall lay us down for our last sleep. But in our sleep we shall dream of Him and be with Him. And when the morning dawns we shall wake up in the splendour of the rising Sun.

YES, I COME QUICKLY.
AMEN. COME, LORD JESUS.

PART III

THE FUTURE PUNISHMENT OF SIN

LECTURE X

THE TEACHING OF PAUL. ETERNAL DESTRUCTION

THE return of Christ will be a coming to judgment. And the Judge has already announced, as a warning, the judgment He will then pronounce; and, in some measure, the punishment He will then inflict. This solemn warning, and threatened punishment, ever present to those conscious of many sins, demand now our reverent attention.

Special reasons make investigation needful. There is in our day a wide-spread revolt against the hasty and heartless delineations of the future punishment of the lost prevalent in the Christian pulpit of an earlier day. And this revolt has prompted various and contradictory interpretations of the teaching of the Bible on this difficult subject, interpretations suggested in no small degree by a desire to escape from difficulties involved in the popular teaching just referred to. On the other hand, to some who cannot accept the interpretations referred

to as grammatically correct, the teaching of Holy Scripture about the future punishment of sin has seemed to contradict the revealed goodness of God; and thus the Bible itself has seemed to be discredited.

Under these circumstances, I propose to reproduce in these lectures, as accurately and fully as I can, the teaching of Christ and His Apostles on this subject as preserved for us in the New Testament. In the first place our investigation shall be purely grammatical and exegetical. We will endeavour to learn what the writers of the New Testament actually taught and thought. We shall observe different shades of teaching in different writers. We shall then discuss certain modern opinions on the subject before us. And lastly we shall review the whole in the light of the revealed character of God and of whatever we know about the administration of the Kingdom of God.

Our inquiry shall begin with the Epistles of Paul. These we will take in chronological order, except that in some measure we shall trace the more important words and phrases in their use and meaning throughout the epistles, and indeed throughout the New Testament. This will give us at times a broader view of the teaching of the sacred volume. From the writings of Paul we shall pass to the Fourth Gospel, to the Synoptist Gospels, then to other parts of the New Testament, and lastly to the Book of Revelation.

The above method will have the advantage of shedding light, not only upon the subject before us, but on its

relative importance as compared with other doctrines of the Gospel of Christ.

In 1 Thess. i. 10 we read that "Jesus delivers us from the coming *wrath*," or *anger*; and in ch. ii. 16 that "*Anger* is come upon them to the end." The same word, commonly rendered *wrath*, but meaning simply *anger* of God or man, is frequently used by Paul to describe the future punishment of sin. In Rom. ii. 5, he says to an impenitent man, "Thou art treasuring for thyself *anger* in a day of *anger*." And we read in *v.* 8 that "for those who obey unrighteousness there will be *anger* and fury." In ch. v. 9, Paul hopes to be "saved from the *anger*;" and speaks in ch. ix. 22 of "vessels of *anger* prepared for destruction." Similar language in Eph. v. 6, Col. iii. 6: "Because of these things comes the *anger* of God."

From this conception of divine anger must be carefully removed all thought of vindictive emotion. In this, the righteous anger of a loving parent affords a human pattern of the divine. The anger of God is simply His detestation of, and determination to punish, sin.

In 2 Thess. i. 8, we find a still stronger word: "*vengeance* for them that know not God." But even this by no means implies resentment. God's *vengeance* is, as the form of the Greek word (ἐκδίκησις) suggests, the due punishment of sin.

In 1 Thess. v. 3, we read that in the day of the Lord there comes to the wicked "sudden *destruction*," from which "they shall in no wise escape." The word rendered destruction, ὄλεθρος, meets us again in a passage

quoted above, 2 Thess. i. 9, as a description of the *vengeance* or due punishment awaiting those who know not God: "who will pay penalty, even eternal *destruction* from the presence (literally, the face) of the Lord, and from the glory of His might." These last words may mean either that the destruction will proceed from the manifested *face* of Christ appearing to judge the world and from the splendour which will accompany the putting forth of His might, or that the destruction will remove the guilty from the benign presence of Christ and from the splendour with which His power will cover His people. The latter is perhaps the better exposition; but certain decision is impossible. The same word is found in 1 Cor. v. 5, "for *destruction* of the flesh;" and in 1 Tim. vi. 9, where it is associated with a cognate word, *ἀπώλεια*. This last word is usually rendered *destruction* or *perdition*, and is used frequently in the New Testament to describe the doom of the wicked. So Rom. ix. 22, "prepared for *destruction*;" Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is *destruction*;" Matt. vii. 13, "leads to *destruction*." The cognate verb is frequently used by Paul and throughout the New Testament in the same sense. So Rom. ii. 12, xiv. 15, 1 Cor. i. 18, viii. 11, 2 Cor. ii. 15, iv. 3, 2 Thess. ii. 10. This family of words is a favourite term to describe the fate of the lost. As such, it demands our careful study.

The active form *ὄλλυμι* is common in Homer and the tragic poets in the sense of *kill*. So in *Iliad* bk. viii. 498 Hector speaks, "I said that I would *destroy* both the ships and all the Achæans, and depart back again to

windy Ilios." So Æschylus, *Agamemnon* l. 1456: "One woman (Helen) who *destroyed* many, very many, souls before Troy." She caused the death of many Greeks. The same active form is often used by the same writers in the sense of *lose*. So in the *Odyssey* bk. xix. 274 we read that Ulysses "*lost* his dear companions and hollow ship;" i.e. they perished at sea. In the same way the Latin *perdere* unites the senses of *destroy* and *lose*. In the middle voice and in the second perfect ὄλωλα, the Greek verb before us is frequently used in the sense of *perish* by death. So *Iliad* bk. iv. 451: "The shriek and the shout of men *destroying* and *being destroyed*."

In the same sense we find frequently, especially in later Greek, the corresponding forms of the verb ἀπόλλυμι. So Xenophon, *Hellenics* bk. vii. 4, 13: "Many men and many weapons they *lost*, retreating through a rough country." The men were killed in battle. In both senses, viz. *to lose* and *to destroy* by death or otherwise, the word is very common.

In view of the frequent use of the word ὄλλυμι and its derivatives as synonyms of death, it is important to reproduce the current Greek conception of the state of the dead. This is made easy by bk. xi. of the *Odyssey*, which describes a visit of Ulysses to the realm of the dead, and his intercourse there with the souls of his dead acquaintances. All are conscious, all remember the things of earth, and some describe even the mode of their own death. But their existence is utterly worthless. Darkness and gloom overshadow

the whole picture. Achilles (ll. 489-91) declares that the poorest lot on earth is better than that of the highest among the dead. We wonder not that such wretchedness is spoken of as *destruction*. For, according to Homer, the dead had *lost* everything worth having. Plato (e.g. *Republic* bk. x. pp. 614ff) describes the dead as still conscious. And this seems to have been the general conception of Greek writers.

With the above uses of the word agrees a not uncommon use of the middle form *ἀπόλλυμαι*, especially in later Greek, in the sense of *ruin* of any kind. So Dio Chrysostom speaks (Or. xxxi., p. 348c) of very immoral men as "those to the last degree *ruined*:" *τοῖς ἐσχάτως ἀπολωλόσι*. Plutarch (*On the Love of Riches* § 7) says of misers: "The children they think to educate they *ruin* (*ἀπολλύουσι*) and pervert, planting in them their own love of money." The same writer (*Avoidance of Debts* § 8) represents Philoxenus as saying, in reference to the luxury at Syracuse, "These things shall not *destroy* (*ἀπολεῖ*) me, but I them." And in the *Life of Mark Antony*, chapter lxvi., the same writer speaks of Cleopatra as "the woman who had already *ruined* him, and *would ruin* him yet more:" *τὴν ἀπολωλεκυῖαν ἤδη καὶ προσαπολοῦσαν αὐτόν*. Of earlier writers, Sophocles in his *Œdipus in Colonus* represents (l. 394) Ismené as saying to Œdipus, who had been smitten with a terrible calamity, "The gods lift thee now, but before they were *working thy ruin*:" *ὤλλυσαν*. Similarly, Euripides, *Medea* l. 78: "we are *lost* if we add a new evil to the old one." In Homer's

Odyssey bk. x. 237-240, Circé turns men into swine, leaving their minds unchanged: and this calamity is in l. 250 called *destruction*, as in 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9. Here indisputably destruction is not annihilation.

In the *Phædo* of Plato the middle voice of the same word is frequently used about the soul in the sense of its ceasing to be, of complete dissipation. But it is worthy of note that, when thus using the word, Plato is careful to define his own meaning. So in the *Phædo* p. 70a we read: "In what relates to the soul men are apt to be incredulous; they fear that when she leaves the body she may be no longer anywhere, but that on the very day on which the man dies she may perish and *be destroyed* (διαφθείρηται τε καὶ ἀπολλύηται), immediately on her release from the body issuing forth dissolved like smoke or air, and in her flight vanishing away into nothingness." So p. 91d: "the soul herself *be destroyed*, and this be death, *destruction* of the soul:" αὐτὴ ἀπολλύηται, καὶ ᾖ αὐτὸ τοῦτο θάνατος, ψυχῆς ὄλεθρος. And so frequently.

In the New Testament the simpler form ὄλλυμι is not found. But ἀπόλλυμι is very common in precisely the same senses as in classical Greek. In the active voice, it denotes to *destroy* or to *lose*; or rather it conveys the idea common to these two English words. The object *destroyed* or *lost* is put in the accusative. It is frequent in the middle voice, for that which is being destroyed; and in these cases is conveniently translated *perish*.

In the active voice, it is frequently used in the sense of *kill*. So Matt. ii. 13, "Herod will seek the child to *destroy* it;" and Mark iii. 6, "they took counsel, in order that they might *destroy* Him." So, in the middle voice, righteous Zechariah is said in Luke xi. 51 to "*have-perished* between the altar and the house;" and in ch. xiii. 33 Christ is recorded to have said that "it is impossible that a prophet *perish* outside Jerusalem." On the stormy sea, as we read in Matt. viii. 25, the disciples cried, "*we-are-perishing*:" ἀπολλύμεθα. For they seemed to be sinking into the jaws of death. In Matt. ix. 17, broken wine-skins are said to *perish*: for they had received damage which made them useless.

Elsewhere the active voice must be rendered *lose*. In Luke xv. 4, 8, we have a man who *has-lost* a sheep, and a woman who *has-lost* a coin: ἀπολέσας. Yet neither sheep nor coin was injured: for they were afterwards *found*, to the joy of their owners. This proves that the word before us does not in itself imply actual injury to the object *lost*; and warns us to use utmost caution in rendering it by the English equivalent *destroy*. For no one would say that the *lost* coin or sheep was *destroyed*. Another contrast is the word *save*. So Matt. xv. 25, Luke ix. 24: "whoever desires to *save* his life will *lose* it."

This last passage reminds us that a man may (*v.* 25) "*lose* himself." In this sense, as noted above, the middle voice is common; as it is for the more tremendous loss awaiting the wicked. Consequently, in different connections of thought, the same word may be both predi-

cated and denied of the righteous dead. As quoted above, Zechariah *perished*; yet in 1 Cor. xv. 18 Paul denies that "they who have been laid to sleep in Christ *have-perished*." From one point of view they lost all: in reality they lost nothing. "God gave His only begotten Son in order that every one who believes in Him may not *perish*, but may have eternal life:" John iii. 16.

A good example of the word is 2 Pet. iii. 6, where we read that the world, overwhelmed by water, *perished* It was not annihilated; and was afterwards restored. The word *perished* (ἀπώλετο) asserts only that the ruin caused by the flood was complete.

In a similar sense we have the corresponding substantive. The myrrh poured on the head of Christ, as recorded in Matt. xxvi. 8, is spoken of by the disciples as *destruction*: εἰς τί ἡ ἀπώλεια αὕτη: "to what end this *waste*?" For it was incapable of further use.

In exact agreement with the above is the use of the same family of words in the Septuagint. But the agreement makes quotation needless.

The various uses of the word are now before us. It does not denote annihilation. For the *lost* may be afterwards *found*; whereas annihilation involves a breach of continuity which excludes subsequent restoration. The old world was not annihilated at the flood: but it was overwhelmed with complete ruin. Nor were the murdered prophets, nor the lost coin or the lost sheep, annihilated. In spite of the various renderings we are compelled to adopt, the word before us conveys always

the same root idea. It denotes utter and hopeless ruin, the complete failure of the maker or owner's purpose for the ruined object; whether it ceases to exist or continues a worthless existence. But sometimes the word looks at this ruin, not as it is in itself objectively, but only from the speaker's own subjective and limited point of view.

The word is therefore appropriately used for the *lost* coin: for, although still existing somewhere uninjured, the owner's purposes with regard to it were utterly thwarted, to her it was absolutely useless. So were the wine-skins in reference to their original purpose: for we must suppose them to have been injured beyond repair. The same word is appropriately used of Ulysses' companions and ship *lost* at sea: for to him they were virtually non-existent. So of the men turned into swine: for such metamorphosis was utter and awful ruin. It may be used as a familiar synonym of death, e.g. of the martyr Zechariah, even by those who look for a life beyond the grave; because, from the common point of view of bodily life on earth, death is utter ruin. Similarly, we speak even of good men as *lost* at sea, and of a man putting an end to his existence. It may be used, as we have seen in the quotations from Plutarch, for complete demoralisation, without thought of the death of the demoralised one. For demoralisation is utter ruin of all that which gives real worth to manhood. It may be used for the absolute extinction of consciousness. But in this case the kind of destruction referred to must be, as in the

quotations from Plato, clearly indicated in the context. Taken by itself, the family of words denotes simply utter and hopeless ruin of any kind. It says nothing whatever about what becomes of the ruined object.

From the foregoing, we see that no one English rendering reproduces the full sense of the Greek word now before us. No one would say that the *lost* coin was *destroyed*. For it was afterwards *found*; and even while lost was uninjured. On the other hand, we should scarcely say that at the deluge the antediluvian world was *lost*. The Greek word conveys the idea common to the English words *destroyed*, *perished*, and *lost*; and this only. It asserts nothing about what has become of the object *lost* or *destroyed* except that, from the point of view of the person who has lost it, it has been reduced to practical worthlessness.

This difference between the meanings of the Greek and English words illustrates the danger of learning the details of Theology from a translation of the New Testament; and especially the danger of building important doctrine on two or three passages of the English Bible. For no version reproduces accurately and fully the original. At the same time, the broad principles of the Gospel are taught so frequently and so clearly that a devout reader, using only a translation, may learn with perfect certainty all that is needful for confident and rational faith and hope. But beyond this he cannot safely go.

The common Greek word discussed above is used by Paul and other writers of the New Testament to

describe the punishment which, at the coming of Christ, will befall those who reject the Gospel. So we read in 1 Thess. v. 3: "when they say, Peace and safety, then comes upon them sudden *destruction*; . . . and they shall not escape." Similarly, 2 Thess. i. 9, "eternal *destruction*;" and Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is *destruction*."

In another connection these words might mean unexpected and quick death. They cannot do so here. For, although death is the common lot of good and bad, Paul repudiates, in 1 Cor. xv. 18, the idea that the dead servants of Christ *have been destroyed*. Moreover the destruction threatened in 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9, Phil. iii. 19, must be much more than the common lot of all men. It can be no less than a supernatural infliction of utter and hopeless ruin. The word means, as we have just learnt, neither extinction of consciousness nor endless conscious torments, but simply the loss of all that makes existence worth having. But either extinction or endless torment might properly be described as *destruction*: for each of these would be utter ruin.

This destruction is spoken of in the New Testament sometimes as having already taken place, at other times as now going on, and elsewhere as to be inflicted in the future. Our Lord implies in Matt. x. 6, xv. 24, that some "sheep of the house of Israel" were already "*lost*." For they had fallen so far that they could not possibly save themselves from utter ruin. But, as we read in Luke xix. 10, "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the *lost*." On the other hand, in

2 Thess. ii. 10, 2 Cor. iv. 3, we read of "those who are *being destroyed*" or "*lost*;" and in 1 Cor. i. 18, 2 Cor. ii. 15, these are placed in contrast to "those who are being saved." The present participles (*ἀπολλυμένοις . . . σωζομένοις*) represent salvation and destruction as processes now going on. They who are in "the way leading to life" (Matt. vii. 14) experience day by day the operation of a power which keeps them safe from peril and is bringing them to the safety of heaven; whereas they who tread (*v.* 13) "the way leading to *destruction*" are day by day undergoing a process which will end in utter ruin. With equal appropriateness, from other points of view, the one class are in Eph. ii. 5 said to be already saved; yet of them Paul says in Rom. v. 9, 10, that they "will be saved," and in chap. xiii. 11 that their salvation is now nearer than when they believed. Similarly, in 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9, we read of destruction to be inflicted at the coming of Christ; and in Matt. x. 28 of "Him who is able to destroy soul and body in Gehenna." For only in the great day will the destruction which has already begun and is daily making progress receive its full consummation.

In 2 Thess. i. 9 the *destruction* awaiting the wicked is further described by an all-important adjective: "They who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, shall pay penalty, viz. *eternal destruction* (*ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον*) from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might." The use and significance of this adjective demand now our best attention.

The meaning of the word *αἰών* is well given by

Aristotle, *About Heaven* bk. i. 9: "The limit (τὸ τέλος) which embraces the time of each one's life, outside of which there is nothing by nature, is called each one's αἰών. In the same way the limit of the whole heaven, and the limit embracing the whole time and infinity, is αἰών, taking its name from ἀεὶ εἶναι." This double use is found in all Greek literature. In other words, αἰών means primarily a man's lifetime, or human life in the aspect of time. It was then felt that there is a life longer than that of an individual, that the realm of things around has its time, and with lapse of time will or may pass away. But in all cases the idea of time is more or less conspicuous.

In these two closely related senses the same Greek word is used in the Septuagint as a very frequent rendering of a Hebrew word of similar significance. So in Ex. xxi. 6, Deut. xv. 17, in reference to a slave who refused to leave his master's house, we read, "he shall serve him *for ever*," i.e. *for life*: εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Not unfrequently it denotes a long period whose beginning is lost in the dim distance of the past. So in Gen. vi. 4, in reference to men before the flood, "The same were the mighty men which were *of old*:" οἱ ἀπ' αἰῶνος. Also Isa. lxiii. 9, in reference to Israel in the wilderness, "He bare them, and carried them all the days *of old*," or "the days *of eternity*:" τὰς ἡμέρας τοῦ αἰῶνος. In *v.* 11 the same Hebrew phrase is rendered ἡμερῶν αἰωνίων: "*eternal* days." In Amos ix. 11 we find the phrase again: "I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days *of old*." So Micah vii. 14.

Of future time we read in Isa. xxxii. 14, "The hill and the watchtower shall be for dens for ever (ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος), a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks." But, that this does not refer to endless desolation, is proved by the words following: "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." God promised to David in 2 Sam. vii. 16: "Thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure *for ever* before thee: thy throne shall be established *for ever*." In this last passage the same Hebrew phrase is rendered, first ἕως αἰῶνος, and then εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. So Eccl. i. 4: "One generation goes, and another generation comes; and the earth abides for ever:" εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Very emphatic is the use of a phrase similar to, but stronger than, this last in Dan. ii. 44: "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which *for ever* shall not be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand *for ever*:" εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, twice.

In the New Testament we frequently meet the contrast of *this age* and *the coming age*. The former denotes the present order of things from the point of view of its duration; the latter points to a new order of things which the coming of Christ will bring in. So Eph. i. 21: "not only *in this age*, but also in that which is to be." Also Luke xx. 34, 35: "the sons of *this age*; . . . they who have been counted worthy of *that age*." And 1 Cor. i. 20, ii. 6, 8: "the disputant, . . .

the wisdom, . . . the rulers of *this age*." In a few passages the same word denotes past time. So John ix. 32: "*Since the world began* (ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος) it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind." And Acts iii. 21: "which God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been *since the world began*:" ἀπ' αἰῶνος. Similarly ch. xv. 18. So in 1 Cor. ii. 7 we are told that *before the ages* (πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων), i.e. before the long periods known as ages began, God formed His all-wise purpose of salvation. It was therefore "the purpose of *the ages*:" Eph. iii. 11. But it was "hidden *from the ages*:" Eph. iii. 9, Col. i. 26.

Most frequently the word is used in reference to the future, especially in the phrase, already used by the LXX., *for the age*, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; or in the superlative phrase *for the ages of the ages*, which we may understand to be ages whose moments are ages, i.e. reaching to the ultimate limits of human thought.

Corresponding with the substantive αἰών is the adjective αἰώνιος. And with the latter as with the former the idea of duration is always associated. We naturally expect to find in the one the same variety of meaning we have already found in the other. If so, we might render it in the one case *lifelong*, in the other *agelong* or *agelasting*, of time past or future; i.e. lasting as long as the man lives to whom it pertains, or as long as the order of things to which it belongs. It denotes always duration conterminous with the age which the speaker has in view.

In classical Greek the adjective is very rare. Plato in

his *Laws* bk. x., p. 904a, speaks of soul and body as being indestructible, but not *eternal*: *ἀνώλεθρον, . . ἀλλ' οὐκ αἰώνιον.* This implies that the latter is the stronger word. In his *Republic* bk. ii., p. 363d, he says that some men "count the best reward of virtue to be *eternal* revelry." Also in his *Timæus* p. 37d the same word occurs twice, as does the corresponding substantive *αἰών*; in each case denoting indisputably long duration.

In the Septuagint the word occurs more than a hundred times. In Job xli. 4 God asks touching leviathan, "Will he make a covenant with thee, that thou shouldest take him for an *eternal* (i.e. a *lifelong*) servant?" This corresponds with the common classical meaning of *αἰών*. In Psalm xxiv. 7, 9, it seems to describe the ancient gates of Jerusalem. In Psalm lxxvii. 5 we read, "I have considered the ancient days, and have remembered the years *of old*," or "*eternal* years:" *ἔτη αἰώνια.* Similarly in Isa. lviii. 12 we read, "thy *agelasting* (*αἰώνια*) ruins shall be built;" i.e. walls which for long ages had lain in ruins. So ch. lxi. 4: "they shall build *agelasting* ruins, they shall raise former desolations, and they shall repair waste cities, desolations of many generations." These passages correspond with another use of *αἰών*, viz. to describe a period beginning in the forgotten past. On the other hand, in Gen. ix. 16 God speaks of an *agelasting* covenant between Himself and Noah and the whole human race that there should not be another flood. It was *agelasting* inasmuch as it will last while the world lasts. Similarly, in Dan. iii. 33 (version of Theodotion. bound

up with LXX.) Nebuchadnezzar says of God, "His Kingdom is an *eternal* Kingdom, and His authority for generation and generation." So ch. iv. 31, vii. 14, 27. In all cases the conspicuous idea is that of time reaching backwards or forwards to the speaker's mental horizon.

Very important light is shed on the meaning of the word *eternal* as used in the Bible by its very frequent use in the Books of the Law to assert the permanence of the ordinances of the Old Covenant. God gave Canaan to Abraham's seed "for an *eternal* possession:" Gen. xvii. 8, xlviii. 4. The various ordinances pertaining to the passover, to the incense, to Aaron's robes, the prohibition of leavened bread, and nearly all other details of the Levitical ritual, are each spoken of as an *eternal* statute: Ex. xii. 14, 17, xxvii. 21, xxviii. 39, xxix. 28, Lev. vi. 18, vii. 24, 26, x. 9, 15, xxiii. 14, 21, 31, 41, etc. Yet for long ages the land of promise has been in other hands; and the ancient ordinances have been finally superseded by the Gospel of Christ. But the word *eternal*, as used to describe these ancient ordinances, was none the less appropriate. For, as given through Moses, they were permanent. But the divine Lawgiver has revoked His own commands. And this revocation is His own interpretation of the words in which they were embodied.

This proves that the word *eternal*, even when used by God, does not in itself imply the absolutely endless permanence of that to which it is applied.

We now pass to the New Testament. In Titus i. 2 we read that "before *eternal* times" God promised

"life *eternal*:" πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων. These promises must have been made in time. Consequently, the adjective before us describes here not limitless, but long, periods of time past. Similarly, in Rom. xvi. 25, we find the same phrase, *eternal times*, describing a period during which the mystery of the Gospel was kept secret. In 2 Tim. i. 9 we read of "grace given to us in Christ Jesus *before eternal times*:" same words as in Titus i. 2. In Jude 7 Sodom and Gomorrah are described as "suffering a punishment of *eternal* fire." These words cannot denote a flame burning for ever, causing everlasting torture, in the unseen world: for the cities are said to "lie before us as an example:" πρόκεινται δεῖγμα. They depict the long ages during which the cities of the plain, destroyed by fire, had lain conspicuously desolate. This lasting desolation is described as "eternal fire." This last phrase evidently denotes here not enduring flame causing enduring torment, but enduring unconscious desolation caused by a flame which had long ago burnt itself out. The fire was agelasting in its abiding result.

Elsewhere the word αἰώνιος refers to the future. Out of seventy times in which it is used in the New Testament, it is found forty-three times in the phrase *eternal life*. It describes the reward of the righteous also in Luke xvi. 9, "the *eternal* tents;" 2 Cor. iv. 17, "an *eternal* weight of glory;" ch. v. 1, "a house *eternal*, in the heavens;" 2 Tim. ii. 10, 1 Peter v. 10, "*eternal* glory;" Heb. v. 9, "*eternal* salvation;" ch. ix. 12, "*eternal* redemption;" *v.* 15, "*eternal* inheritance;" 2 Peter i. 11,

"*eternal* Kingdom." We have also in Rev. xiv. 6 "an *eternal* Gospel;" in Heb. xiii. 20, "the *eternal* covenant;" in 2 Thess. ii. 16, "*eternal* encouragement;" and in 2 Cor. iv. 18, in contrast to the things seen which are *temporal*, or *for a season*, the things not seen are said to be *eternal*. The only contrast here suggested is of duration. This must therefore be the chief significance of the word *eternal* as it is indisputably of the word translated *temporal*. In Heb. ix. 14 we read of "*eternal* spirit;" in 1 Tim. vi. 16, "*eternal* might;" and in Rom. xvi. 26 of "the *eternal* God."

In Philem. 15 Paul writes: "For perhaps for this reason he was separated from thee for a season (literally, for an hour) that thou shouldest have him *for ever*." He means that in heaven Onesimus will be an abiding enrichment to Philemon. The contrast with πρὸς ὥραν makes conspicuous here, as in 2 Cor. iv. 18, the idea of long duration involved in αἰώνιον.

The same word describes the fate of the lost in Heb. vi. 2, "*eternal* judgment" or "sentence;" Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41, "the *eternal* fire;" *v.* 46, "*eternal* punishment;" Mark iii. 29, "*eternal* sin;" and in 2 Thess. i. 9, the passage now before us.

Wherever used in the New Testament or elsewhere, both substantive and adjective denote duration extending over a long period: and this is apparently their only significance.

It is undesirable and unfair, as a prejudgment of the question at issue, to translate the word before us by the English words *eternal* or *everlasting*. For in popular

discourse these words mean *endless*, and thus go beyond the meaning of the Greek word. A convenient and more exact rendering is *agelasting* or *ageslasting*. For this suggests the corresponding substantive *age* from which the adjective is derived. Where it refers to a single lifetime, as in Job xli. 4, the word may be rendered *lifelong*.

In view of this varied yet harmonious use of the word αἰώνιος, we now ask what ideas it adds in 2 Thess. i. 9 to those already conveyed by the words "destruction from the presence of the Lord." These convey, as we have seen, the sense of ruin utter and hopeless, but not necessarily final: for the lost may be found. But we are now told that the ruin is *agelasting*. This last word carries forward our thoughts to the age which the coming of Christ will introduce. And of that age it is not easy to conceive an end. Even the age to come discloses to the writer no hope of restoration. The adjective *agelasting*, now added to the word *destruction* already used in 1 Thess. v. 3 to describe the doom of the lost, suggests irresistibly that of the *ruin* there foretold the writer sees no end. From his subjective point of view it was final.

On the other hand, the words before us make no assertion about the condition of the lost, i.e. whether they will continue in a worthless and wretched consciousness, or sink into unconsciousness. For, as we have seen, the word *destruction* does not denote extinction but only the loss of all that gives worth to existence. Nor can we infer, from this use of the

adjective *agelasting*, that the persons destroyed are themselves agelasting. For it describes not the persons destroyed but the destruction which awaits them. This last will be agelasting, even if the lost ones sink into unconsciousness. For its results will continue throughout the age during which, but for their sin and rejection of salvation, they would have enjoyed infinite blessing in the presence of God. Consequently, the passage before us makes no assertion about the condition of the lost except that they will be ruined, and that their ruin will continue to the utmost limit of the writer's thought.

A good example of the word *agelasting* used to describe the abiding result of a passing event is found in a quotation from Justin on p. 61, where we read of an "agelasting resurrection." But here the word *resurrection* involves the permanence of the persons thus raised into new life; whereas the word *destruction* does not in any way involve the permanence of the object destroyed.

The meaning of the important phrase *eternal* or *agelasting life* in Rom. ii. 7, v. 21, etc., and the light which this phrase sheds on the meaning of the word before us will be discussed in Lectures XII. and XIV.

Another passage from one of the later epistles of Paul sheds so much light on the phrase we have just been endeavouring to understand, that I cannot delay a reference to it. In Phil. iii. 19, touching some who are called "the enemies of the cross of Christ," we read the awful declaration, "whose end is destruction."

Similarly, of some who are called ministers of Satan we read, in 2 Cor. xi. 15, "whose end shall be according to their works," i.e. manifestly a bad end.

The word τέλος, here translated *end*, denotes in classical Greek much more than mere cessation. It is the attainment of a goal, the full outworking of all inherent tendencies. So we say "end and aim." This meaning becomes very conspicuous in some of its derivatives: e.g. τέλειος, meaning *perfect* or *full-grown*; τελειόω, to *fulfil* purposes or promises or commands. And it gives great force to such passages as Rom. vi. 23, "the *end* (i.e. full outworking) of those things is death." But this fuller meaning includes always the idea of finality. And sometimes this last idea is so conspicuous that the word conveys little more than the sense of cessation. So Luke i. 33: "He shall reign over the house of Jacob *for ever*, and of His Kingdom there shall be no *end*:" εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας . . . οὐκ ἔσται τέλος. And Mark iii. 26: "It cannot stand, but has an *end*:" τέλος ἔχει. In these passages the word τέλος denotes that the object to which it is applied has completed its course and then passed away. But so far as I have noticed, it never leaves room for subsequent reversal.

Paul writes with tears, "whose *end* is destruction." But if for the ruined ones there were final restoration, even after long ages of ruin, these ages of darkness would roll by, and give place to sunshine and life. That sunshine, we must believe, would know no sunset or cloud. And as age succeeds age of increasing glory, the ages of darkness would dwindle into insignificance

as a dim and fading memory of a retreating past. Of such happy spirits none could say that their *end* was destruction or was according to their bad works. To them destruction would be not an *end*, but a dark pathway into eternal light. The *end* of all men, good and bad, would be the same ; viz. eternal life.

In other words, if Paul had had any idea whatever that all men will at last be saved, he could never have written the words which indisputably he has written. And this subsequent declaration strongly confirms our interpretation of 2 Thess. ii. 9. It almost compels us to believe that Paul added to the word *destruction* the adjective *eternal*, in order to mark as final the ruin of those who, in the day of vengeance, shall be banished from the presence of the great Judge.

Such is the result of our first study. Anger and vengeance at the coming of Christ await those who commit unrighteousness and disobey the Gospel. In several conspicuous passages, Paul describes the future punishment of sin by a word denoting ruin, utter and hopeless. In one passage he asserts that this destruction will be agelasting, which we understood to mean that the foreseen ruin reaches to the utmost limit of the Apostle's mental horizon. And in another passage it is said to be the end of the ruined ones. This implies that the ruin will be final.

LECTURE XI

THE UNIVERSAL PURPOSE OF SALVATION

THE teaching expounded in Lect. X. must now be supplemented and guarded by other passages which speak clearly of God's purpose of salvation as universal. These will be found in the second, third, and fourth groups of the letters of Paul.

In 1 Cor. xv. 22 we read that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." This categorical assertion, some expositors interpret as referring to the general resurrection, when, as we read in John v. 28, 29, "all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will go forth; they who have done the good things, to resurrection of life; but they who have practised the bad things, to a resurrection of judgment." But this interpretation cannot be allowed. For, although the word *life* is frequently used to describe the present bodily life of men and animals and (compare 1 Cor. xv. 36) even of vegetables, it is never once used in the Bible to describe the future state of the lost. When referring to existence beyond the grave, it is always, as in John v. 29, a specific term distinguishing the state of the saved from that of those who in the

great day will be condemned. Now the passage we are discussing (1 Cor. xv. 22) takes us beyond the limits of bodily existence on earth. And in that loftier sphere, the life and incorruption brought to light by the Gospel give to the word *life* a new and loftier significance. This nobler use of a common word is a conspicuous feature of the phraseology of the New Testament. And it must rule the significance of the passage before us. The lost will go forth from their graves not to life but (Rev. xx. 14, 15) to a second death.

Moreover, although Christ will call all men from their graves, it is utterly opposed to the thought and phrase of Paul to speak of men whom in Eph. ii. 12 he declares to be "without Christ" as being "made alive *in Christ*." This last phrase, so conspicuous a feature of the writings of Paul, describes ever an inward relation to Christ shared only by those who are inwardly united to Him and find in Him their spiritual home. These considerations compel us to understand the words "in Christ shall all be made alive" as referring to a blessed and glorious resurrection.

Other expositors, unable to give to the word *made-alive* any but a good meaning, and to the word *all* a wider and narrower meaning in the same verse, have accepted this passage as a categorical assertion that all men will ultimately be saved. This interpretation makes Paul flatly contradict his own words in Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is destruction." And inasmuch as the whole chapter (1 Cor. xv.) refers specially, and appar-

ently exclusively, to the resurrection on the day of Christ's return, this exposition would imply, or at least suggest, that on that day all men will enter into the enjoyment of life eternal; in absolute contradiction to 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9, John v. 29, and much other express teaching in the New Testament. An interpretation involving such contradiction must not be accepted unless it be absolutely demanded by Paul's own words.

To these words, with the above interpretations in view, we will now turn. Paul has asserted in 1 Cor. xv. 18 that, if there be no uprising of dead men, then they who have been laid to sleep in Christ, i.e. His dead servants, have *perished.* As the word was expounded in Lect. X., they have lost all that is worth having. And men who, like the Apostle, have sacrificed everything for a hope in Christ are of all men most to be pitied. This suggestion, he rejects with a triumphant assertion in *v.* 20 that "Christ is risen from the dead, a firstfruit of the sleeping ones." He refers evidently only to those mentioned in *v.* 18 as sleeping in Christ. Now the word *firstfruit* suggests a harvest to follow. This suggestion, Paul supports by saying that, just "as through man came death, also through man comes resurrection of dead men." And this statement he confirms by a more definite assertion, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive." Throughout the whole chapter the writer thinks only of the dead in Christ and of resurrection only as a gateway to life eternal. Indeed it contains emphatic and reiterated assertions which

are true only of the saved. So, without any further limitation, still writing about "the resurrection of the dead," Paul says in *v.* 43, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." Whatever be the ultimate destiny of the lost, none can suppose that these words were intended to describe the lot awaiting them at the coming of Christ.

Now in all human discourse universal terms are limited by the speaker's mental horizon. Beyond that horizon, they have no validity to assert or to deny. And in this chapter the unsaved lie altogether outside the writer's thought. Writing as a believer in Christ to fellow-believers, he thinks only of those who abide in Christ and will share His glory. He remembers that through the sin of Adam his readers, like himself, will pass through the dark portal of death; and remembers also that they who believe in Christ will live, though they die; that they owe this immortal life to the resurrection of Christ; and that it will be consummated in their own resurrection from the dead.

Notice carefully that in this passage Paul writes, not *πάντες ἄνθρωποι*, as in Rom. v. 12, 18, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4, where he refers expressly to the whole race, but the less definite term *πάντες*, which leaves the precise reference to be supplied from the context. This confirms strongly the limited exposition given above. Similarly, in 2 Cor. v. 15, he writes that "one died on behalf of all:" an assertion true of the whole race. But the words which follow prove that the Apostle

refers only to those who have shared the blessed result of the death of Christ, and in this sense are dead with Him: "One died for all, therefore all died." In each case, Paul's words, read in the light of their context, have not the full compass they might have if they stood alone as an absolute assertion.

From the above it is now evident that the passage we have been discussing sheds no light on the future punishment of sin. It does not even assert a universal purpose of salvation. I have discussed it merely to guard against prevalent misinterpretations. It is, however, of great importance as containing, in a few plain words, the germ of teaching expounded more fully in another passage bearing much more closely on the matter before us, which now demands our attention.

In Rom. v. 18 we have again the definite phrase *πάντας ἀνθρώπους* in reference first to the sin of Adam, and then to the salvation brought by Christ. The same words are found also in *v.* 12, where we have a definite and emphatic assertion, "to *all men* death passed through." This historical statement is expounded in *v.* 14: "death reigned from Adam to Moses." Without doubt it covers the entire human race. Even over Enoch and Elijah, during their life on earth, death reigned, until by the hand of God they were rescued from its dominion. Here then we have a passage in which manifestly the writer's horizon embraces the whole family of man.

We notice at once that *v.* 18, although consisting of two clauses by no means short, contains no verb.

Consequently, the word which usually conveys the main assertion of the sentence must be supplied from the context. This defect sheds obscurity over the whole verse, and renders needful most careful grammatical study of the words used.

The most conspicuous feature of this verse, occurring twice in each clause, is the common preposition εἰς. Upon our interpretation of this small word depends our exposition of the whole verse.

This preposition denotes, in its simplest meaning, motion towards the inside of something. It is thus more definite than πρός with an accusative, which denotes simply motion towards an object, it may be only towards its circumference. From this local sense is easily derived that of mental movement or direction. It is the ordinary Greek word to describe an intelligent purpose. And this is its most common derived sense. Less frequently it is used to describe a tendency, sometimes an unconscious outworking of blind force. At other times it notes an actual result, intentional or unintentional. These three senses are closely allied, and flow naturally from the radical local sense of the word. The first and third are found together in closest relation in Rom. vii. 10: "The command which was for life, this was found by me to be for death." The purpose of the law was life; its actual result to Paul was death. The context, and especially the contrast of life and death, make quite clear the different senses conveyed in this one short verse by the same common preposition.

When the word εἰς denotes a purpose, it may almost always be suitably rendered *for*, as in the above rendering of Rom. vii. 10. The Revisers' usual rendering, *unto*, is obscure, and therefore unsatisfactory.

In the light of this various use of this common preposition, we turn again to Rom. v. 18. The absence of a verb compels us to fill up its defective grammatical structure from the preceding verses; and this is the more easy because *v.* 18 is expressly given as a summing up of the foregoing argument: "*Therefore* as through," etc.

The earlier clause recalls at once *v.* 12, where we have the same words, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, evidently marking out the extent of the result of Adam's sin: "to all men death passed through." So *v.* 14: "death reigned from Adam to Moses."

But in the foregoing verses we have no assertion that through Christ benefit has actually reached *all men*. Indeed the universal phrase, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, is conspicuous by its absence from *vv.* 15-17. The free gift has abounded, not to *all men*, but εἰς τοὺς πολλούς. These last words occur again still more conspicuously in *v.* 19, where we read that "*the many* will be constituted righteous." This repeated change of expression cannot have been chosen merely in order to call attention to the great number of the saved; for this would be done more effectively by the universal phrase, *all men*. Another explanation of it must be sought. Moreover, in these two passages, the definite article, οἱ πολλοί, by no means implies or suggests universality,

but marks out the many as a definite object of thought. The article suggests universality only when this is involved in the definiteness of the object referred to. Similarly, in *v.* 17, we read, not that all men "will reign in life," but that this will be the lot of those who receive the gift of righteousness. In other words, where we have a plain statement of actual or expected result, the universal phrase, *all men*, is conspicuous by its absence. Only once do we find it in the second part of the comparison, and then in a passage (*v.* 18) in which we have no categorical statement.

The explanation is not far to seek. In defect of clear statement, we must fall back upon the most common use of the preposition εἰς, when not used in a strictly local sense. In *v.* 18 Paul wishes to say that the life eternal, which, as he taught in *v.* 17, will be actually enjoyed by some men, i.e. by "those that obtain the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness," was designed *for all men*. We may render the verse, "therefore, as through one trespass (judgment came) for all men, for condemnation, so also through one decree of righteousness (a free gift came) for all men, for justification of life."

To this exposition no one can object that it gives to the same preposition in the same verse two meanings, viz. in the one case that of actual result and in the other that of design. In both cases, it denotes direction. As in Rom. vii. 10 so in this passage, the context indicates that in the former clause the direction was that of actual result and in the latter that of purpose. For

indisputably all men die. But Paul never says that all men will reign in life through Christ. The exact meaning and compass of the indefinite words used in this verse must be interpreted by the argument of which it is a summing up and by the writer's general teaching.

Nor can it be said that this exposition breaks down the comparison of Adam and Christ, that a contingent and partial benefit is no match for actual and universal injury. For this failure of the comparison is only apparent. For although death is inevitable and universal, continuance under its dominion depends upon ourselves. In Christ, God offers to every man an entrance into eternal life. Consequently, each man's fate is in his own hands. Indeed we gain in Christ much more than we lost in Adam. For, as we learn in *v.* 16, they who accept the offered life will be saved, not merely from the result of their father's first sin, but from the due punishment of their own "many offences."

We may therefore accept Rom. v. 18 as an assertion that the salvation brought into the world by Christ is as wide in its design as was the sin of Adam in its actual result; or, in other words, that God's purpose of salvation embraces the entire race. But we find in it no assertion that all men will actually be saved.

In Rom. xiv. 11 Paul quotes from Isa. xlv. 23: "As I live, saith the Lord, to Me shall bow every knee, and every tongue shall confess to God." The prophet refers apparently to willing homage paid by true servants of God. His words are most easily understood as referring

to universal worship in that new earth and heaven which he saw from afar. But it would be unfair to interpret them as meaning that that glory will ultimately be shared by all the wicked men of the prophet's own day. Indeed the last words of his glowing prophecy (Isa. lxvi. 24) speak of the corpses of those who have sinned, of the worm which shall not die and the fire which shall not be quenched. These terrible words reveal how far from the writer's thought was a universal restoration.

This prophecy Paul quotes to support his assertion that "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God;" and he rightly draws from it the inference, "therefore each of us will give account of himself to God." For this universal homage must be a fulfilment of a divine purpose; and this purpose implies that God claims the obedience of all men, and will therefore require an account from all.

We must therefore place Rom. xiv. 11 beside ch. v. 18, as announcing or implying that God's original purpose of salvation embraced every child of Adam. But, inasmuch as it is quoted by Paul, not in reference to the ultimate salvation of all men, but simply to prove that all men will give account to God for actions done on earth, we cannot accept it as an assertion of the ultimate salvation of all.

From Rom. xiv. 11 we turn naturally to Phil. ii. 9, 10, where, in language borrowed from the same prophecy, we have a plain statement of God's purpose in raising the Crucified One above and beyond all others and

giving to Him the Name beyond every name. As before, the graphic delineation "every knee bow and every tongue confess" must describe the willing homage of the servants of God. But here the worshippers are further described as belonging to three classes. "Those in heaven" are its angelic inhabitants: same word in Eph. i. 3, 20, ii. 6, iii. 10, vi. 12, 1 Cor. xv. 40, 48, 49. "Those on earth" are living men: same word in Phil. iii. 19, 1 Cor. xv. 40, 2 Cor. v. 1. "Those under the earth" are the dead in contrast to the living. So Homer (*Iliad* bk. ix. 457) speaks of Pluto as "Zeus under the earth." It is unsafe to infer from these last words that Paul thinks of universal worship earlier than the resurrection. His threefold division includes angels and men as they were at the moment of writing. And he divides men into those now living and those already dead. For both these classes will join in that eternal song. Without thought of time, looking only at the persons belonging to these three all-inclusive classes, Paul says that God exalted Christ in order that every one of them may bow to Him.

It is not safe to infer from the graphic terms "every knee and every tongue" that angels and departed spirits have bodily form. For these words were naturally prompted by the Apostle's thoughts about living men; and with these he easily associated angels and the dead.

The phraseology of the verse before us is appropriately taken from Isa. xlv. 23, already referred to, which follows and confirms an announcement of God's

purpose of salvation for the Gentiles: "look to Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." And inasmuch as that ancient purpose will be fulfilled in homage paid to Christ, and only thus, the submission to God here foretold is legitimately described by Paul as submission to Christ. Notice also that the "glory of God the Father," i.e. the manifestation of His greatness evoking His creatures' admiration, is here represented as the ultimate purpose for which God exalted Christ. As ever, Paul rises from the Son to the Father. A close coincidence is found in 1 Cor. xv. 28.

From the mention in Phil. ii. 10 of "those under the earth" as objects of God's purpose of salvation, we cannot infer a probation in Hades, even for those who on earth did not hear the Gospel. For it is quite possible that of this large class the fate of each will be determined by his acceptance or rejection of such light as he had on earth; and, if so, the eternal song of the heathen who loved the truth will be a designed result of Christ's victory over death. The whole passage is so easily explained by Paul's teaching elsewhere that we cannot fairly infer from it any further teaching about the position or prospects of the dead.

With the passage just studied may be classed Col. i. 19, 20: "He was pleased that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, . . . whether the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens." And Eph. i. 9, 10: "According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him . . . to sum up all things in

Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth." Thus in each of the longer epistles of the third group, written by Paul apparently from his prison at Rome, and embodying his loftiest and widest thought, we have a plain assertion that God's purpose of salvation embraced every individual man; but we have no assertion or hint that in every man that purpose will be accomplished.

Similar teaching is found in the latest group of the Pauline epistles. In 1 Tim. ii. 1-5 we have an exhortation that prayer be made for *all men*, among whom are specified kings and men in authority; and we are told that God "desires *all men* to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth." In ch. iv. 10 we read that God "is Saviour of *all men*, specially of believers." In Titus ii. 11 the Revisers read "the grace of God bringing salvation to all men." But the words so rendered mean only salvation "for *all men*:" σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις. The Greek dative merely specifies those for whose benefit the saving grace appeared. In each of these passages we have the universal phrase noted above, *all men*. But the first and third of them state only a divine purpose, not necessarily an actual result. And if God's purpose of salvation embraced all, He may justly be called "Saviour of all men:" and, inasmuch as only believers will actually be saved, He is in this special sense their Saviour.

One more passage demands attention here. In Rom. xi. 26 we have a categorical assertion that "all Israel will be saved." This reveals a universal blessing

awaiting the ancient people of God. But it did nothing to lessen the gloom which in ch. ix. 3 almost forced from the patriot's heart a wish to be himself, on behalf of his brethren, separated from Christ by a curse which was, in the language of the Old Testament, an irrevocable doom. And it does nothing whatever to prove that Paul expected ultimate salvation for those individual Jews who had gone down into the grave "enemies of the cross of Christ."

Besides the above passages, I know not of any which assert or imply, or seem to imply, that all men will eventually be saved.

To sum up. Paul states clearly, and in several places, that God's purpose of salvation embraced every son of Adam; but he never says that in every one that purpose will be actually accomplished. And manifestly the kindness of God is resisted by many whose "impenitent heart" refuses to be led to repentance, and of whom Paul writes in Rom. ii. 5 that they are treasuring up for themselves wrath in the day of the righteous judgment of God. Moreover even in the epistle which depicts in most glowing language God's universal purpose of salvation, Paul speaks casually, but very solemnly, of some "whose end is destruction;" and we find nothing in his writings to modify this terrible assertion. We are therefore compelled to believe that in his mind the universal purpose of salvation was consistent with the final exclusion from its glories of some of those originally included in its scope.

Whether, beyond the wide horizon of the Apostle's

knowledge, and thought, and hope, the universality of God's purpose of salvation itself suggests or implies an ultimate salvation for those who die rejecting the salvation offered to them in the Gospel, we shall consider when the entire teaching of the New Testament is before us.

LECTURE XII

THE GIFT OF LIFE ETERNAL

IN Lect. X. we found that the doom of the unsaved is described frequently throughout the New Testament by a family of words which has no precise equivalent in English but which we rendered sometimes *destroy* or *destruction*, or in the middle voice *perish*, at other times by the word *lost*. And we saw that it denotes utter and hopeless, yet not necessarily final, ruin.

Another word (*φθορά*) almost or quite equivalent to *destruction* is used by Paul to describe the future punishment of sin; and is usually rendered *corruption*. It seems to denote *damage* of any kind; especially, though perhaps not always, such damage as involves ruin. The cognate verb we have already, on p. 109, found in a quotation from Plato, as an equivalent for *destroy*, to describe a dissipation or dissolution of the soul. In 2 Cor. vii. 2 Paul says for himself and his companions, "we have *corrupted* no one." But he expresses in ch. xi. 3 a fear lest his readers' thoughts be *corrupted* from the simplicity which has Christ in view. In 1 Cor. xv. 33 we have a quotation from a

Greek poet asserting that "bad company *corrupts* good manners." The present participle occurs in Eph. iv. 22, where "the old man" is said to be *undergoing-corruption*. So 1 Tim. vi. 5, 2 Tim. iii. 8: "men *corrupted* in mind." In these two last, all thought of annihilation is absent. Paul cannot mean to suggest that sin tends to extinguish the intelligence. The cognate substantive is used in Col. ii. 22 to describe the destruction of food by eating. In 1 Cor. xv. 42 the body laid dead in the grave is said to be "sown in *corruption*:" but the Apostle assures us in *v.* 53 that "*corruption* will put on *incorruption*." The decay of the natural objects around us, and the limits thus imposed on their development, are described in Rom. viii. 21 as "the bondage of *corruption*." In 1 Cor. ix. 25 the "*corruptible* crown" is a withering garland of leaves. And such withering by no means involves annihilation. As a warning to some whose wrangling threatened to injure the Church, Paul asserts solemnly in 1 Cor. iii. 17 that "if any one *damages* the temple of God, him God *will damage*." So in Gal. vi. 8 he declares that "he who sows for his own flesh shall from the flesh reap *corruption*."

The close similarity of the words we have rendered *destruction* and *corruption* prevents our adding much from the latter word to the information already in Lect. X. derived from the former touching Paul's conception of the punishment awaiting sinners. But the use of this exact synonym is additional proof that the fate of the lost presented itself to the great Apostle chiefly in the aspect of utter ruin, of the destruction

of all that gives worth to humanity. And some of the passages quoted above prove that this second conspicuous word used by Paul to describe the punishment of sin does not in itself imply annihilation.

Another remarkable feature of the teaching of Paul, of John, and of our Lord as recorded in each of the four Gospels, now demands our most careful attention; viz. the word *life*, and especially the term *eternal life*, used to describe the state of the saved as distinguished from the unsaved. Sometimes believers are said to have been already made alive in Christ, and to have life as a present possession: at other times life is spoken of as a hope for the future.

In Eph. ii. 5 we read that "God has *made-alive* with Christ us who were dead." So John iii. 36, "He that believes on the Son has eternal *life*." And ch. v. 24: "He that believes . . . has *eternal life*, and . . . is passed out of death into *life*." Similarly, ch. vi. 47, 54. And 1 John v. 12: "He that has the Son has the *life*."

More frequently the word *life* refers to the future. So Rom. ii. 7: "To those who by way of perseverance in good work seek glory and honour and incorruption," God will give "*eternal life*." In ch. v. 17 we read, that "they who receive the gift of righteousness will reign in *life*." To those who have been liberated from the bondage of sin "the end" will be "*eternal life*," which is "the gift of God:" ch. vi. 22, 23. They who "put to death the actions of the body *will live*:" ch. viii. 13. But they who "sow for the Spirit will from the Spirit

reap *eternal life*:" Gal. vi. 8. Hence in Phil. ii. 16 the Gospel is called "the word of *life*;" and in ch. iv. 3 we read of the "book of *life*." In 1 Tim. vi. 12 men are bidden to "lay hold of *eternal life*;" and in *v.* 19, of "that which is really *life*." In 2 Tim. i. 1 we have a "promise of *life* in Christ Jesus," who (*v.* 10) "has brought to light *life* and incorruption through the Gospel." Similarly in Titus i. 2, iii. 7, we have "hope of eternal *life*."

In the Fourth Gospel and in the First Epistle of John the same terms, *life* and *eternal life*, in the same sense as in the above quotations from Paul, are very common. Nor are they uncommon in the Synoptist Gospels. Matt. vii. 14 has already been quoted. In ch. xviii. 8, 9, our Lord contrasts "entrance into *life*" with being "cast into the eternal fire." In ch. xix. 16, 17, one asks what he shall do in order that he "may have *eternal life*;" and the Teacher replies, "If thou wishest to enter into *life*, keep the commandments." And in *v.* 29 He speaks of some who "will inherit *eternal life*." We read in ch. xxv. 46, that in the great day some will "go away into *eternal life*." Similar teaching is attributed to Christ in the Second and Third Gospels. Compare Dan. xii. 2: "Some will awake to *eternal* life."

That this remarkable phraseology is found in documents so widely different in phrase and thought as the Epistles of Paul, the Fourth Gospel, and the Synoptist Gospels is complete historical proof, even apart from the authority of Holy Scripture, that the words we are considering were actually used by Christ to describe the

reward of righteousness. Moreover, this use of the word *life* to describe the state of the righteous as contrasted with that of the wicked, implies that *life*, in the sense given to this word by our Lord and by Paul, is not the inalienable possession of all men, good and bad. And this is confirmed by the fact that, although the word *life* is used to describe present bodily life on earth, it is never once used throughout the New Testament to describe the future state of the lost. Beyond the grave there is no life except for those who are in life-giving union with Christ. On the last day, as we read in John v. 29, they who have done evil will go forth from their graves; but they will have no share in the "resurrection of *life*."

In Matt. vii. 13, 14, "the way leading to *life*" is contrasted with that "leading to *destruction*." Similarly, in John iii. 16, we have the contrast, "may not *perish* but may have *eternal life*." Another contrast is given in *v.* 36: "He that disbelieves the Son shall not see *life*; but the *anger* of God abides upon him."

Another contrast to *life* is *death*, spoken of sometimes as present, at other times as future. So in Eph. ii. 1, Col. ii. 13, men still living are spoken of as "dead through trespasses." A dissolute woman is said in 1 Tim. v. 6 to be, "even while *living*, *dead*." So in 1 John iii. 14: "we have passed out of *death* into *life*. . . . He that loves not abides in *death*." On the other hand, we read in Rom. vi. 21, 23, "the end of those things is *death*," and "the wages of sin is *death*." And ch. viii. 13, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall *die*." All

this we understand. Inasmuch as they are beyond human help, as a dead man is, the unsaved may be spoken of as already *dead*. But inasmuch as only the future will reveal the awful destruction awaiting them, they may be described as on the way to death.

We now ask, What light does this phraseology cast upon the future punishment of sin? What is involved in the life already possessed by, and in fuller measure awaiting, the children of God; and in that death which is the wages and end of the service of sin?

Evidently the death which is the punishment of sin is, in its full development, much more than the death of the body. For this is the common lot of all men, good and bad. Nevertheless, since the word *death* was originally and is most frequently used to describe the end of bodily life, from this common use must be derived its meaning when it describes the present or future state of the unsaved. What then is our chief idea of the death of the body? Not annihilation. For a body which has ceased to breathe is just as dead if preserved by the embalmer's art as if reduced to dust. And the Greeks spoke of slain men as *dead*, even though some writers, e.g. Homer, believed that in another state of existence the departed are still conscious; without any suggestion even of the ultimate cessation of consciousness.

What then is the idea conveyed by natural death? I think that it is cessation of the normal existence of a certain conspicuous class of objects, and their consequent utter ruin. This class of objects is distinguished

by well-known characteristics which go to make up our idea of *life*. A corpse is *dead* because the normal existence of a living body has ceased. It is true that sickness also is abnormal. But health passes into sickness by imperceptible gradations ; whereas bodily death is marked off from life by a broad and unmistakable line. To pass that line is to the body absolute ruin. And this ruin is natural death.

Already we have seen that in the New Testament the word *destruction* denotes utter and hopeless ruin, whether the object destroyed be annihilated or maintain a worthless existence. We saw also that the same word was a common synonym for natural death, even with men who believed that the dead were still existing and conscious. It is now clear that the death which is the punishment of sin is a synonym of the word *destruction*, which already in Lect. X. we have found used in the same sense. It is utter and hopeless ruin of body and spirit. As such, it may be spoken of as present. For sinners are in a state of ruin, from which they can be saved only by the hand of Him who raises the dead. Or it may be spoken of as future. For present ruin will then receive its tremendous consummation.

Perhaps I may add that, just as the corruption of a dead body sinks infinitely below the worst corruption of disease, so we are compelled to believe that the consummation of punishment in the great day will go far beyond the worst moral corruption on earth.

It is also worthy of note that, just as bodily death is

separation of the body from the unseen and inward principle which was once its life, so spiritual death is separation of man from Him who is to all intelligent creatures the Spirit of life.

Having thus in some measure and with some confidence determined the meaning of the word *death* when describing the punishment of sin, we shall now be able to determine the meaning of the word *life* when describing the reward of righteousness. Since death does not imply annihilation, there may be existence and consciousness without life. Of this we have a good example in the slain heroes whom Ulysses, as we read in the *Odyssey*, met and conversed with in the realm of the dead. These had consciousness and intelligence, but not life. Life therefore is more than existence and consciousness.

Now Paul tells us, in Rom. vi. 23 and elsewhere, that *eternal life* is the gift of God in Christ to those who believe. But this by no means implies that all others will sink into unconsciousness at death, or at judgment, or ultimately. For there is a life higher than that of the body. And this higher life is the hope of the children of God. It includes not only conscious existence, but blessedness. Consequently, the loss of blessedness is the loss of this higher life. And that this higher life belongs only to the saved is no proof or presumption that all others will sink into unconsciousness. For the loss of life is simply the loss of all that which gives to existence its real worth.

The doctrine of "the immortality of the soul" and

the confusion introduced by this phrase into Christian Theology are discussed in Lect. XVI.

The frequent phrase *eternal life* to describe the reward of the righteous sheds light on the word *eternal* or *agelasting* when used to describe the destruction awaiting the wicked. We have seen that in 2 Cor. iv. 18 it denotes a very long period of time in contrast to a short period: "for the things seen are temporal; but the things not seen, *eternal*." Now, apart from the meaning of this word, unquestionably the life of the righteous will be absolutely endless. For it will be an outflow of the endless life and the infinite love of God. They are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, in an inheritance incapable of corruption, defilement, or decay: Rom. viii. 17, 1 Peter i. 4. They are predestined from eternity to be conformed to the image of the Son of God: Rom. viii. 29. To conceive a limit to their blessedness, is to set bounds to the infinite life and love of God: and this is impossible. "He shall reign over the house of Israel to the ages: and of His Kingdom there shall be no end:" Luke i. 33. We notice now that the adjective *eternal* is selected by Paul and by every writer in the New Testament except James to describe this endless life. No stronger term is ever used by them. And we notice that this word, with these associations, is selected by Paul and others to describe also the destruction of "those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus; who will pay penalty, even *eternal destruction*." This confirms our inference from the words "whose end is

destruction" that ultimate restoration of those condemned at the great day lay altogether beyond the hope or thought of the great Apostle. See further in Lect. XIV.

One more point in the teaching of Paul demands attention. In Rom. ii. 5 he says to a man of impenitent heart, "Thou art treasuring for thyself anger in a day of anger and of revelation of God's righteous judgment." This implies that day by day the impenitent man is increasing the punishment awaiting him at the great day. The same is implied in 2 Cor. v. 10: "That each may receive the things done in his body, . . whether good or bad." For if recompense is according to action, it will vary with the infinite variety of guilt. This variety implies consciousness continuing beyond the great assize. For if the punishment then inflicted were unconsciousness, it would be alike to all. Consequently the fate of the lost cannot, in Paul's view, be immediate annihilation.

Moreover, if the lost ones be conscious, their existence must be one of intense suffering. For the light of the great day will reveal to them the greatness of the salvation they have slighted and lost, the untold wealth of blessing they have carelessly thrown away, and the infinite love of God which they have shamefully trampled under foot. From that awful vision of folly and ingratitude and sin, there will be no escape. Agony more terrible than this retrospect of a wasted and sinful life, we cannot conceive. It is involved in our

inference that the lost will be conscious of their doom. And this inference, as we have just seen, follows inevitably from the frequent teaching of Paul and of other New Testament writers that Christ will give back to every man according to his works.

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not add very much to the teaching of the epistles which bear the name of Paul. In Heb. vi. 2, among the first principles of Christ we find "eternal judgment." This is evidently condemnation to the eternal destruction spoken of by Paul. In *v.* 8 we have land "bringing forth thorns and thistles, whose end is to be burnt." (Compare Phil. iii. 19, 2 Cor. xi. 15.) Similarly in Heb. x. 27 we read of "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which will devour the adversaries." These two passages introduce an important element of teaching which will come before us more clearly in the Gospels, and which I shall discuss in Lect. XIII. In *v.* 29 we are warned against a "worse punishment" of which "they will be counted worthy who have trampled under foot the Son of God."

Such are the results of our research into the teaching of Paul touching the future punishment of sin. His chief thought about it was conveyed by three synonymous terms, which I have rendered *destruction*, *corruption*, *death*, each commonly used to denote the end of human and animal life on earth. Of these terms, the first two are used also to describe injury of any kind so serious

as to render worthless the injured object. They are frequently used where there is no thought of the annihilation of the object injured or lost. This proves that annihilation is no part of the meaning conveyed by these words. The third term, *death*, must be interpreted by the conception of the dead prevalent when the books of the New Testament were written. And I have shown that with many, Jews and Greeks, this conception did not include extinction of consciousness.

In one passage this destruction is said to be the *end* of those destroyed. In another it is said to be *eternal*. This last word we found to denote duration either lifelong or reaching beyond the limits of the speaker's thought. We noticed also that the same adjective is used to describe the endless life awaiting the people of God. All this compelled us to believe that Paul looked upon the condemnation to be pronounced on the great day as ruin, complete, hopeless, and final.

We found several important passages in which the Apostle speaks of the divine purpose of salvation as embracing all men. But we found nothing suggesting the actual ultimate salvation of all men, nothing to set against the proofs just given that he expected some men to be finally lost.

Beyond the assertion of their utter ruin, we have little information from the pen of the Apostle touching the state of the ruined ones. We have nothing asserting or suggesting that they will be, even ultimately, annihilated, or that their consciousness will ever cease. For the words used to describe their fate are frequently

used of objects which, although destroyed, indisputably continue to exist, and some to think and speak. And, although life beyond the grave is the gift of Christ to those who receive Him, we saw that, since the life which He gives is much more than existence or consciousness, the loss of that life by no means implies loss of conscious existence. On the other hand, the words *destruction* and *corruption* and *death* by no means imply the continued existence of that which is destroyed. As to what becomes of it, they leave us in complete ignorance.

The only information about the state of the lost given by Paul is, that their punishment will vary with their guilt. And this implies that the destruction inflicted at the great day will not be immediate annihilation. It must therefore involve intense suffering.

In this comparative reticence of the great Apostle there is profound solemnity. Before his reluctant eye looms a vision of ruin. In that dark vision he cannot find a single ray of light. He therefore cares not further to analyse it; but turns away (Rom. vi. 22, 23) to greet the life eternal, the gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

LECTURE XIII

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

IN John iii. 16 we meet again, as a description of that from which God gave Christ to save men, Paul's technical and favourite term, *be destroyed* or *perish* or *be lost*: "That every one who believes in Him may not *perish*, but may have eternal life." So ch. x. 28: "They shall not *perish* for ever, nor shall any one seize them out of My hand." The active form of the same verb, in the sense of *lose*, occurs in ch. vi. 39: "All that which (as we should say, All those whom) Thou hast given Me, that I should not lose any of it (of them) but should raise it (them) up at the last day." The same active form, in the sense of *destroy*, is found in ch. x. 10, referring to a wolf destroying sheep. Similarly, and in complete harmony with the classical use of the word as expounded in Lect. X., in ch. xi. 50 Caiaphas suggests that it is better "that one man die on behalf of the people, and not that the whole nation *perish*." He refers evidently to the utter ruin which seemed to hang over the nation.

The same technical term, as a description of the unsaved, is found also in the Synoptist Gospels. So

Matt. x. 28: "who is able to *destroy* both soul and body in Gehenna." And ch. vii. 13: "broad is the way which leads to *destruction*."

This use of the same Greek word in documents so dissimilar as the Synoptist Gospels, the Fourth Gospel, and the Epistles of Paul suggests very strongly that its Aramaic equivalent was actually used by Christ, and in the same sense. And we have already seen that the chief idea conveyed by the Greek word is utter ruin, without thought of what becomes of the ruined object. We therefore infer with confidence that this was the chief thought of the earliest Christians about the fate of the unsaved, and that this conception was derived from, or sanctioned by, Christ.

As in the Epistles of Paul the destruction awaiting sinners is called *death*, so in John vi. 50 salvation is described as escape from death: "That one may eat of it, and not die." Also ch. xi. 26: "He that believes in Me shall not die, for ever." His body will descend into the grave and become a prey of worms; but even bodily death will not be to him, as it is to others, utter ruin.

Already we have seen that in the Fourth Gospel and in the First Epistle of John the term *eternal life* is used in precisely the same sense as by Paul.

The phrase *anger of God* is used, in the sense familiar to us in the writings of Paul, in John iii. 36: "He that believes not shall not see life, but the anger of God abides upon him."

In John v. 25 Christ is reported to say, that there comes, and has already come, "an hour when the dead

will hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear will live." The words, "and now is," noting a resurrection already beginning, prove that Christ refers to those who are spiritually "dead" through sins; to the Gospel which is "the voice of the Son of God;" and to the spiritual life given at once to those who accept the Gospel. In *vv.* 28, 29 we have another resurrection, remarkable both for its similarity to, and its differences from, the earlier one. It is in the future; and therefore the words, "and now is," are absent. To mark the distinction from the spiritually dead just mentioned, Christ speaks in the second passage of "all that are in the graves." For, unlike the spiritual resurrection, the bodily resurrection will be universal. But, although in the great day "all in the graves will hear the voice" of Christ, not all "will live." For "resurrection of life" belongs only to those "who have done the good things." The rest "will go forth" from their graves to a "resurrection of judgment." This passage is instructive, as emphasising the restriction, noted in my last lecture, of the word *life* to the blessed dead. The wicked "shall not see life."

Another passage claims special attention. In John xii. 32 Christ makes the remarkable prediction, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Myself." At first sight His words seem to mean that He will actually save all men. We inquire whether this appearance is confirmed by further research.

At once we notice that we have not here the emphatic phrase "all men," so conspicuous in Rom. v. 12, 18

1 Tim. ii. 1, 4; nor have we the universal phrase in John i. 9. This by no means implies, and perhaps does not even suggest, that the word *all* does not include the entire race. But it is worthy of note that the Evangelist does not use a definite term ready to his hand and manifestly embracing all men. He is satisfied, in his reproduction of our Saviour's meaning, with a somewhat looser expression.

At the same time it is not easy to see how the word *all* can have a scope less than all mankind. Certain foreigners have come, seeking an interview with Jesus. Their arrival greatly moved Him. In them He sees the forerunners of multitudes from all nations who will soon reach out their hands to Him for salvation, the beginning of a world-wide empire. But between Himself and that vast dominion looms in fearful outline the shadow of His cross. Only through suffering can He enter His glory. The cross must be the stepping-stone to the kingdom. For the nations will come to Him only when drawn by mysterious influences proceeding from Himself, influences which cannot be exerted till He has borne the sins of the world and has entered the Holiest Place to make intercession for men. That He may attract others, Himself must "be lifted up."

These last words are explained by the Evangelist as referring to the approaching crucifixion. And such apparently is the reference of the same words in ch. iii. 14: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must needs the Son of Man be lifted up, in order that every one that believes in Him may have eternal

life." But the words added here, "from the earth," suggest a further reference. Christ's shameful elevation on the cross is the first step towards the throne. And from that throne He will send forth the Holy Spirit, the mysterious Agent of a divine influence, which will draw the nations to Christ. Only by Himself rising can He raise them.

We now ask, In what sense will Christ draw all men to Himself? An answer to this question will be found in the writings of Paul.

In Rom. ii. 4 the Apostle says that God is leading to repentance a man of impenitent heart, who is treasuring up for himself anger in a day of anger. Evidently he means that upon this impenitent man "the kindness of God" is exerting influences tending towards repentance. These influences are the strong hand of God drawing him towards better things. It is equally certain that these influences are utterly in vain. The man shows no signs of repentance. He is still on the way to destruction. Indeed the penalty awaiting him is day by day increasing. He is heaping up a treasure of anger to be in that day revealed. These influences, real, though in this case through man's resistance utterly ineffectual, Paul describes by the categorical indicative, "God is leading thee to repentance." The same tense is used in the same sense in Gal. ii. 14. Peter by his bad example was unintentionally doing his utmost to force the Gentiles to adopt Jewish modes of life. This Paul describes by assuming that he is compelling them to do so: "why compellest thou, etc.?" Yet we have

no proof or presumption that the Gentiles yielded to this compulsion. But whatever they did, a real influence was brought to bear upon them. Hence the Greek indicative.

Similarly, in Acts vii. 26, Stephen says, in reference to the two contending Israelites in Egypt, that Moses was reconciling them or "bringing them to peace." But we have no hint that his efforts were in the least degree successful. Yet here again we have a Greek indicative. Our translators (A.V. and R.V.) have felt the unsuitability of the English indicative, and have rendered in harmony with our mode of thought, "would have set them at one again." Another good example is found in 2 Macc. vii. 1, where men are described as "being compelled" to eat forbidden food: yet they refused to eat, and died without eating.

It is now evident that in their modes of conceiving and expressing ineffectual influences, the Greek and English languages differ. But the Greek mode of thought is as correct as our own, and more graphic. The hand of God was actually upon the impenitent man, exerting an influence which was none the less real because it was resisted, and was therefore ineffectual: the work in which Moses was engaged with the two Israelites was peace-making, although it brought no peace: and upon the seven brothers the strongest possible influence was brought to bear to compel them to eat pork; but in vain.

This Greek mode of speech, and Paul's teaching in Rom. ii. 4, explain and limit the words of Christ in

John xii. 32. For the Apostle's assertion must be true of all men. Otherwise the man of impenitent heart, who is evidently a pattern of all such, could not be blamed for not knowing that the kindness of God was leading him to repentance. Moreover, whatever God does to man He does through the agency of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we read in 1 Cor. viii. 6: "through whom are all things." In other words, the assertion implied in Rom. ii. 4 is but a fulfilment of the prediction and purpose of Christ recorded in John xii. 32. And this purpose is suitably expressed in the language actually used in this last passage. For whatever the Greek present indicative asserts touching time present, and the Greek imperfect about some time past of which the writer is thinking, the future indicative asserts about time to come. They describe an action going on in present, past, or future time. If, as Paul's words imply, Christ had resolved to exert on all men an influence drawing them to Himself, He might correctly say, even though He foresaw that in many cases, through man's resistance, this influence would be ineffectual, according to the usage of the Greek language, "I will draw all men to Myself." And there is in the context nothing whatever suggesting that He meant more than this. Consequently the passage before us in no way contradicts Phil. iii. 19, 2 Cor. xi. 15, and other passages which imply an expectation that some men will be finally excluded from the glories of heaven.

Notice also that the teaching involved in John xii. 32 is a necessary complement to that of John vi. 44: "no

one can come to Me, except the Father who has sent Me draw him." For unless these influences, needful for salvation, were given to all men, the blame of each one's destruction would not lie at each one's own door.

One more passage bears directly on the matter before us. In John xv. 6 we read, from the lips of Christ, that the branch which does not continue in the vine is being cast into the fire, and is burning. Similarly in Matt. xiii. 30, in a picture of the final judgment, the wicked are compared to weeds bound together to be burnt up. The same metaphor is traced in ch. iii. 10, 12, Luke iii. 9, 17, to the lips of the Baptist: "Every tree that bears not good fruit is cut down and cast into fire; . . . the chaff He will burn up with fire unquenchable." This last phrase denotes evidently an irresistible destruction from which there is no rescue. The fate of the barren trees is re-echoed by Christ in Matt. vii. 19. Destruction by fire is found also in Heb. vi. 8: "That which bears thorns and thistles is reprobate and near to a curse; whose end is to be burnt." In all these passages the punishment of sin is compared to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. And in the last passage this is said to be "the end" of the ungodly.

On the other hand, in 1 Peter i. 7 we have the metaphor of gold tested by fire. And in 1 Cor. iii. 13 the judgment day is compared to a fire which will test every man's work.

Notice in these two classes of metaphors two distinct and opposite effects of fire. Faith is compared to gold which is tested by fire, and thus proved to be genuine.

But whenever fire is used as a symbol of the future punishment of sin, the wicked are compared to vegetable matter, to vine branches, or fruit trees, or chaff, or weeds, all which are destroyed utterly, and never purified or benefited, by fire. Throughout the New Testament there is no hint that the punishment of sin, under the image of fire, is remedial. It is always put in a form suggesting only destruction. For no destruction is more complete than that of vegetable matter by fire. And this metaphor is found, as we have seen, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is attributed in the First, Third, and Fourth Gospels to Christ, and in the First and Third to John the Baptist. It confirms strongly the teaching of Phil. iii. 19, 2 Cor. xi. 15, Matt. xxvi. 24, Mark xiv. 21, that the punishment of the wicked is final.

Can we go a step further, and say that the metaphor of destruction by fire teaches or suggests the annihilation of the wicked? Certainly the burning of vegetable matter comes as near to annihilation as do any natural phenomena. For the consumed branches and weeds become in a short time altogether invisible. And we notice that in the Greek text both John and Christ are represented as using the strong word *κατακαύσει* (*-σαι*), *to burn up*, to describe the fate of the lost. Do they mean that the soul itself will be dissipated into non-existence, and that unconsciousness will be the ultimate fate of those who to the end refuse the offers of mercy?

It may be at once admitted that, if the annihilation of the wicked were as plainly taught elsewhere in the

New Testament as is the finality of punishment in the passages quoted above, it would, like this last doctrine, be confirmed by the metaphor before us. Indeed this metaphor suggests search for such teaching. But the search is in vain. Outside the metaphor we are considering the New Testament contains, as we shall see, no hint whatever that the unsaved will ever cease to be. Now metaphor, unless supported by plain teaching, or at least by other metaphor agreeing with it only in the point in question, is a most uncertain basis of doctrine. For all comparison fails somewhere. And, when doctrine is built simply on one metaphor, it is impossible to distinguish between the essential teaching, and the mere drapery, of the metaphor. If punishment be final, this is of itself sufficient to justify the use of the metaphor of destruction by fire; and therefore marks the limit of its doctrinal significance.

The Fourth Gospel has not materially increased our knowledge of the future punishment of sin; except that it has taught us that Paul's favourite mode of conceiving it, viz. as utter ruin, was equally familiar to its writer, and was by him confidently attributed to Christ. We have found one passage which at first sight seemed to suggest that the salvation brought by Christ would actually reach and save all men. But this seeming contradiction to the plain teaching of Paul vanished before more careful research. In an opposite direction we found a metaphor suggesting the ultimate extinction of the lost. But the uncertainty attaching to all doctrinal inferences based only on

metaphor warned us not to accept this suggestion as decisive. On the other hand, in this metaphor, and in the irretrievable completeness of the destruction of vegetable matter by fire, we found a strong confirmation of other New Testament teaching which asserts that the ruin of those condemned in the great day will be final.

LECTURE XIV

THE SYNOPTIST GOSPELS

IN the Synoptist Gospels, punishment by fire at the end of the world occupies a position much more conspicuous than it has in the Epistles of Paul and in the Fourth Gospel. This conspicuous element of New Testament teaching demands now our careful attention.

As we have already seen, the lost are compared to barren fruit trees, to chaff, and to weeds, destroyed by fire. The slight variety of metaphor makes more conspicuous the element common to all these passages, viz. the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. And, than this, no destruction is more complete and final.

In connection with the metaphor now before us, we find, in Matt. v. 22, "the Gehenna of fire." The word *Gehenna* occurs again in *vv.* 29, 30, "cast into Gehenna;" and "the Gehenna of fire," in ch. xviii. 9. So ch. x. 28: "Fear Him that is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." The same word is in Mark ix. 43 used as an equivalent of "the unquenchable fire." It is found also in Luke xii. 5. Thus in each of the Synoptist Gospels the Valley of Hinnom is used as the symbolic locality of the future punishment of sin.

This singular reference to a valley close to Jerusalem is explained in Jer. vii. 31: "They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire." Similarly, ch. xix. 4-7: "Because they have forsaken Me, . . . and have built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons in the fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, . . . therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Topheth, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter."

Whether or not the victims of these idolatrous sacrifices were burnt alive, we do not know. But our Lord's use of the metaphor of fire to describe the punishment of sin suggests irresistibly intense suffering, like that caused by burning. For the metaphor is evidently designed to teach the tremendous punishment awaiting sinners. But the mere burning of one already slain adds nothing to the punishment inflicted. It is therefore impossible to doubt that our Lord, as His teaching is recorded in the passages quoted above, used the word *fire* in order to convey the idea, not only of irreversible ruin, but of intense suffering.

This idea of conscious suffering in connection with the metaphor of punishment by fire is placed beyond doubt, and is thrust into marked prominence, in Matt. xiii. 42: "shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the wailing and the gnashing of teeth." The exact repetition of these words in *v.* 50 adds to their awful significance. The wail of anguish proclaims, in language

which cannot be misunderstood, the conscious torment of those who suffer this fearful punishment. The same words are found again, in ch. xxiv. 51, as a description of the lot of the hypocrites; and in chs. viii. 12, xxii. 13, xxv. 30 as a description of "the outer darkness." The occurrence six times of this remarkable phrase, in five chapters of the First Gospel, and in Luke xiii. 28, reveals its large place in the thought of Christ, and the deep impression made by it on the mind of the Evangelist. But it is worthy of note that in all these passages nothing whatever is said either about the end or the endlessness of this severe suffering. The curtain is lifted for a moment several times, revealing a vision of anguish; but we have no indication of its duration.

An equally terrible description, from the lips of Christ, of the future punishment of sin is given in Mark ix. 43-48. It is no casual allusion, but a most solemn threefold delineation of the fate of the lost, supporting a most startling threefold exhortation. After announcing the reward of those who perform even the least service for His disciples, our Lord threatens terrible punishment for those who lead them astray. He then turns to His hearers, and three times bids them make the greatest earthly sacrifices, even to surrender hand or foot or eye, rather than to "go away to Gehenna." This last word, Christ at once expounds by the addition, "to the fire unquenchable." In the second warning we have simply the phrase, "cast into Gehenna." In the third, we have the same phrase with the remarkable addition, "where their worm dies not, and the fire is

not quenched." These added words are evidently parallel to the words, "fire unquenchable," in the first warning.

This remarkable phrase, which occurs in the New Testament only here, recalls at once the closing words of the Book of Isaiah. The prophet sees a new heaven and a new earth. And in that new world, from month to month and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh will come to worship before God. Yet, amid that glory, the glorified ones will go forth and behold the corpses of those who have sinned. Manifestly, therefore, not all men will share that final glory. For the visible corpses of the rebellious ones proclaim the doom of the spirits which in those bodies once sinned against God. This dark shadow falling so terribly across the bright vision, the writer deepens by saying that "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." The undying worm suggests the continuance of the awful spectacle. For if there were no corpses to feed upon, the worm would die. And if there were no fuel, the fire would be extinguished. In this last sense the Greek word here used by the LXX. is found in Matt. xxv. 8, where the foolish maidens say that for want of oil their lamps *are going out*: σβέννυνται. For these sinners there is, therefore, no rescue: else the worm would die for lack of food, and the fire be extinguished through lack of fuel.

The plain reference of this passage to the new heaven and earth, when the old things have passed away, proves that the fire and worm are metaphorical And

this is placed beyond doubt by the impossibility of the same corpse being consumed by fire and by worms. Moreover, the trees and chaff and tares are manifestly metaphorical. So must be the fire which destroys them. In other words, the passages before us do not in the least degree imply or suggest that the wicked will be punished by material fire.

The prophet adds that the lost ones "shall be an abhorrence to all flesh;" i.e. to the worshippers who in Isa. lxv. 23 are so described. The word *abhorrence* occurs again in a similar context in Dan. xii. 2: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame and eternal abhorrence."

The collocation of fire and worm is found also in Judith xvi. 17: "The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgment, putting fire and worms into their flesh; they shall feel them, and wail for ever." The "fire and worms" here are evidently instruments of suffering. So Sirach vii. 17: "The vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worm." These passages suggest that this combined metaphor was not uncommon among the Jews to describe the future punishment of sin.

These words, from the Book of Isaiah, our Lord adds to the terrible picture in Mark ix. 48 as a description of Gehenna. The easiest explanation of them is that they were added to convey the idea of intense suffering, like that caused by the gnawing of a worm or by fire. But the change from "will not die" and "will not be quenched," in Isa. lxvi. 24, to the present tense in Mark

ix. 48, "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched," suggests continuous suffering in the present rather than endless suffering in the future. This change of tense and the difficulty of the metaphor forbid us to interpret this passage as an assertion of the endless torment of the lost.

In Matt. v. 25 the lost are said to be cast into a prison from which they will not escape till they have paid the last farthing. But these words add nothing to the results already gained. They contain no indication whether or not the debt will some day be paid and the prison door opened, but merely assert that, until the debt is paid, the prison will remain closed.

In Matt. xii. 32 we read, "Whoever may speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come." But it is utterly unsafe to infer from this negative assertion that for some sins there is forgiveness beyond the grave. On the other hand, it reveals to us sin unforgiven, and therefore punishment continuing, throughout the age of ages to be introduced by the great day, an age extending to the furthest limit of human thought. In the parallel passage, Mark iii. 29, we read that "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness for ever, but is guilty of an everlasting sin:" i.e. he is inwardly held fast by the agelasting grip of the unforgiven sin. There is no suggestion here of continuance in actual sin; but a clear reference to the abiding result and penalty of a past sin. The "agelasting sin" corresponds with the "agelasting punishment" in Matt. xxv. 46.

The word *tormentors* in Matt. xviii. 34, and *torment* in Luke xvi. 23, 28, will be discussed in Lect. XV.

In Matt. xviii. 8 we have the phrase "cast into the agelasting fire." In ch. xxv. 41 our Lord foretells that in the great day He will say to those on His left hand, "depart, ye cursed, into the agelasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The phrase *agelasting fire* is found again in Jude 7; where of Sodom and Gomorrah we read that they "lie before us undergoing punishment of agelasting fire." The writer refers, as we have seen on p. 121, to the strange desolation which for long centuries had conspicuously rested upon the site of the cities of the plain. The *fire* was *eternal*, not as an ever-burning flame, but as producing agelasting effects. From that flame there was for the doomed cities no rescue; although after destroying them the fire soon burnt itself out. The use of the phrase *agelasting fire* to describe the conspicuous destruction of the cities of the plain warns us that, when used by Christ to describe the doom which in the great day He will pronounce, this phrase does not necessarily assert the endless suffering of the lost. But it suggests irresistibly their final ruin.

In Matt. xxv. 46 "the eternal fire" is further described in the awful announcement, "these shall go away into *eternal punishment*, but the righteous into life eternal." These solemn words demand now our most careful study.

The Greek word here rendered *punishment* and its cognate verb are used by classical writers for the pruning of trees, the cutting away of anything superfluous, and the restraining of what would otherwise go beyond

bounds. They are also used not unfrequently in the sense of punishment. Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric* bk. i. 10, distinguishes the word κολάζω used here from τιμωρέω used in Acts xxii. 5, xxvi. 11, by saying that the former is punishment for the good of him who suffers it, the latter for the satisfaction of him who inflicts it. But, that this distinction is not universal, even in classical Greek, we learn from Euripides, *Helen* l. 1172, where we read of punishment by death, θανατῳ τοὺς κακοὺς κολάζομεν, which could not be remedial. The same word is used in Acts iv. 21: "They let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them." And certainly the idea of the moral benefit of punishment was very far from the thought of those who were unable to punish the Apostles. The same word is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in 2 Peter ii. 9, 1 John iv. 18. The verb and substantive occur sixteen times in the Book of Wisdom, thirteen times in the Books of Maccabees, and in a few other places in the Septuagint. But not once in the LXX. or in the New Testament does the context suggest the idea of remedial punishment, or anything beyond the penalty of wrong-doing.

We now ask, Does the word *punishment* necessarily imply actual suffering and therefore continued consciousness? So large a proportion of punishment involves suffering that the word suggests the idea. But there are forms of punishment which are merely deprival of good, apart from actual suffering. Indeed a child who, instead of going to an entertainment, is put to bed

and goes to sleep may be said to be undergoing punishment even while asleep. For, had he not misconducted himself, he would have been awake and in pleasure. Taken by itself, the word punishment does not imply actual suffering. We have, however, found other passages, e.g. Matt. xiii. 42, in which our Lord asserts the actual torment of the lost. This torment must therefore be part of their punishment. And we have seen that several New Testament writers assert that punishment will be in proportion to each one's sin, that this involves consciousness, and that consciousness of the lost can be no other than acute suffering. But, since not all punishment is suffering, we have no right to infer that in this case suffering and punishment are coextensive.

In the passage before us, Matt. xxv. 46, the *punishment* awaiting the wicked is said to be *eternal* or *agelasting*, in contrast to the *agelasting life* awaiting the righteous. This threatened punishment is made more terrible by the awful command foregoing in *v.* 41 "depart from Me, ye cursed, into the *agelasting* fire prepared for the devil and his angels." For the fire and the punishment must be practically identical.

A similar collocation of reward and punishment is found in Dan. xii. 2: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life and some to shame and eternal abhorrence."

We now ask, Does the word *eternal* or *agelasting*, in this last passage and in Matt. xxv. 46, denote absolute endlessness?

Indisputably, as we saw on p. 150, the "eternal life" awaiting the righteous will be absolutely endless. But this does not imply that even in this phrase the word *eternal* or *agelasting* denotes endlessness. This last idea is mentally supplied from what we know about the nature and purpose of God. The word itself denotes only duration extending to the writer's mental horizon.

A good example of this word used twice in one verse to describe a limited and an unlimited period is Titus i. 2, where we read of a "hope of life *eternal* which God promised before times *eternal*." These last were the long ages which elapsed between the first promise of salvation and its manifestation in Christ. But these times, though long, were not unlimited. On the other hand, the life promised is absolutely endless. The length, in each case, of the *age* during which the "life" or the "punishment" lasts is left to the intelligence of the reader.

It is, however, worthy of note that in Matt. xxv. 46 the "agelasting punishment" and "agelasting life" are alike in the future; and are consequently in much closer relation than are the "agelasting life" and "agelasting times" in Titus i. 2. This closer relation suggests, though it does not absolutely prove, that the punishment will be as enduring as the life.

We now ask, Does agelasting punishment involve agelasting suffering? Already we have learnt that the punishment of the wicked will include acute suffering. And indisputably the word *agelasting* describes the duration of the punishment, or at least of its effect. But,

as we have seen, the future punishment of sin will include not only actual suffering but the loss of endless blessedness. Consequently, whether or not the suffering continues, the punishment will be as endless as the life which but for his sin the sinner would enjoy. Similarly, the civil penalty of death is not measured by the pain inflicted but by the loss of life. No one thinks, apart from any retribution beyond the grave, that the punishment is over when the criminal is dead. This is well put by Augustine in his *City of God* bk. xxi. 11: "He who for some great crime is punished with death, do the laws reckon his punishment by the space of time in which he is put to death, which is very brief, and not by this, that he is removed for ever from the society of the living?" *In sempiternum auferunt de societate viventium.* Similarly, whatever becomes of the lost, their punishment must be said to continue so long as they are not restored to the favour and life of God. In other words, the phrase before us, *eternal punishment*, does not necessarily involve agelasting suffering.

It is worthy of note that "the wailing and gnashing of teeth" found six times in the First Gospel and once in the Third is never said to be "agelasting" or "for ever and ever." When our Lord speaks about the actual suffering of the lost, He says nothing about its duration. On the other hand, we have as yet found no hint that their suffering will ever cease.

If the above exposition of the word *punishment* be correct, the various passages which assert or imply the finality of the doom of the lost imply also the

absolute endlessness of their punishment. For if destruction be the end of the wicked, and if but for their wickedness they would enjoy endless blessedness, then is their punishment endless. And in this light we must interpret the great passage before us.

In Matt. xxvi. 24, Mark xiv. 21, our Lord says of Judas, "It were good for him if that man had not been born." But if, after ages of suffering, the traitor were at last admitted into the endless and infinite blessedness of the saved, that blessedness would be worth having, even at the cost of the terrible suffering preceding it. It would, in the light of eternity, in which light Christ ever spoke, be better for him to be born, and cast into the lake of fire, and then pass into eternal life rather than never to have existed. These solemn words, at the most solemn crisis of the life of Christ, seem to me to be little or nothing less than an assertion that Judas will never enter the rest of heaven.

The Synoptist Gospels have added materially to our reproduction of the teaching of the New Testament about the future punishment of sin. Already from the Epistles of Paul and from the Fourth Gospel we had learnt that the fate of the lost will be ruin utter and final. And Paul, by teaching that punishment will be in proportion to sins committed, and consequently capable of increase, had implied that the punishment inflicted in the great day will not be immediate annihilation, which would be alike to all, but a graduated punishment, involving at least a temporary consciousness. This slight indication of conscious suffering beyond the last judgment has

now received terrible confirmation. The door of the eternal prison has been in a measure opened by the hand of Christ, and through it we have heard a voice of wailing and gnashing of teeth. And the metaphor of fire, already used by Christ as His words are recorded in the Fourth Gospel, has received an extension which can be explained only as intended to convey the idea of acute suffering. The wailing is not expressly said to be endless; but we find no suggestion whatever of escape from it. We have found a combined metaphor quoted by Christ from the Book of Isaiah: "their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." It suggests incessant suffering. Twice the doom of the lost has been described as *eternal* or *agelasting fire*, and once as *agelasting punishment*. A casual remark of Christ recorded in the First and Second Gospels implies clearly that Judas will never enter heaven; and this one case involves a possibility that others also may be finally lost. It thus confirms other teaching of the New Testament which asserts or implies the finality of the doom which will be pronounced by Christ in the day of judgment. But the Synoptist Gospels contain no clear assertion of the endless suffering of the lost.

The Book of Acts does not add materially to the teaching of the rest of the New Testament about the future punishment of sin. As their addresses are recorded, the Apostles were more eager to announce the resurrection of Christ and His Gospel of pardon than to describe the fate of the disobedient.

In Acts iii. 21, Peter says in reference to Christ: "whom heaven must needs receive until the times of the restoration of all things." Evidently he refers to our Lord's Second Coming. But we have no right to interpret these somewhat indefinite words as an announcement of a restoration of all men at the coming of Christ, and thus make them contradict the abundant and plain teaching of the New Testament. The same phrase is used by Christ in reference to a prophecy fulfilled in the appearance of the Baptist: "Elijah comes, and restores all things." Certainly the great forerunner brought in no universal salvation. This shows how uncertain a foundation for any such doctrine are these words of Peter.

LECTURE XV

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

TWO famous passages, 1 Peter iii. 19, iv. 6, which assert that at His death Christ went in spirit and made proclamation to the spirits in prison, and that to dead men good news was announced, in order that, though condemned in flesh, they may live in spirit, I must pass over. For I am unable to give any satisfactory explanation of them. And it is most unsafe to build up theological doctrine on passages of which the general drift is uncertain. Moreover I cannot detect in these passages any reliable addition to the teaching of the rest of the New Testament. Possibly they shed an uncertain ray of light on some who have gone down to the grave without hope. But this by no means even suggests a probation beyond the grave. For it is quite possible that the good news announced beyond the grave was a reward for loyalty during life to such truth as these imprisoned ones possessed. Certainly this difficult passage gives no hope for those who have died rejecting the Gospel.

The Second Epistle of Peter and that of Jude are closely allied, and may well be studied together. A conspicuous feature of 2 Peter is the word *ἀπώλεια* or

destruction, which occurs five times, and the cognate verb twice. The verb occurs twice in the Epistle of Jude. With these writers, as throughout the New Testament, these words are technical terms for the future punishment of sin. Evidently the chief thought of the early followers of Christ about the fate of those who reject the Gospel is that of ruin, the loss of all that gives worth to existence. For this, as we saw in my tenth lecture, is the radical meaning of the word. This meaning is illustrated by 2 Peter iii. 6, which says that at the flood the then world was *destroyed*. This destruction was manifestly not annihilation, but, apart from the family of Noah, utter ruin. Nor was it final ruin. But it was a ruin from which only the power of the Creator could save the world. This confirms my earlier exposition of the meaning of the word.

This ruin is said to be inflicted at the great day, which is therefore called in 2 Peter iii. 7 a "day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly men." Meanwhile they are undergoing punishment. So ch. ii. 9: "The Lord knows how to rescue devout men from temptation, but to reserve unrighteous men in punishment for the day of judgment." The state of the lost is further described in ch. ii. 17: "For whom is reserved the gloom of darkness." In Jude 13 we have the same words, with the terrible addition that this awful doom is "for ever" or "for an age."

We turn now to the Book of Revelation. In so doing we must not forget its picturesque and dramatic character.

In it, as in the parables of Christ, we look not so much for exact definition of doctrine as for vivid presentation of familiar truth. It must be read in the light of the plain statements of the rest of the New Testament Only so far as its figures are confirmed elsewhere, or at least as various figures confirm each other, can we safely build upon them doctrinal inferences.

A very conspicuous feature of the Book of Revelation is its use of the words *βασανίζω* and *βασανισμός*, which we may provisionally render *torment*, to describe the future punishment of sin. A cognate word we have already found in Matt. xviii. 34 in the same connection of thought. In other connections the same family of words occurs several times in the Gospels and in the Apocrypha. The total difference of environment will make these passages most useful guides in our search for the radical meaning of the word.

These words were the technical term in Greek for the examination of witnesses by torture. They then passed easily to denote any infliction of acute suffering. A good example is found in 2 Macc. vii. 8, 13, 17, where both the substantive *βάσανος* and the verb *βασανίζω* are used to describe the acute and somewhat prolonged torments inflicted on the seven martyrs. Similarly, in Matt. viii. 6, a paralytic boy is said to be grievously *tormented*. In Luke xvi. 23 we read that Dives lifted up his eyes, being in *torments*, and saw Abraham afar off. In *v.* 24 the sufferer describes his own condition: "I am in anguish in this flame." And in *v.* 28 he speaks of his abode as "this place

of *torment*." No words could more vividly describe acute suffering. In 2 Peter ii. 8 Lot is said to have *tormented* his righteous soul with the lawless works of the men of Sodom: a very strong way of describing the pain thus caused him. In all these passages the meaning of this family of words is beyond doubt. It denotes everywhere actual and acute suffering.

In Rev. xii. 2 the same word describes the agony of childbearing: in ch. xi. 10 we read that "the two prophets *tormented* those dwelling upon the earth." In ch. ix. 5 we are told that to the locusts who went forth from the smoke "it was given that they should not kill" those that had not the seal of God on their foreheads, "but that they may be *tormented* five months." A description is added of the pain thus caused: "And their *torment* is as of a scorpion's *torment* when it strikes a man." We have here actual suffering inflicted and felt.

With these associations of thought connected with the word before us we now turn to three tremendous passages in which it is used. In Rev. xiv. 9-11 we read: "If any one worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, also he shall drink of the wine of the fury of God." These last words describe the stupefying effect of this punishment. The strange collocation of words following, "which is mixed unmixed in the cup of His anger," suggests a combination of different elements together with undiluted intensity. This terrible description of suffering is then strengthened by a change of metaphor:

"they shall be *tormented* with fire." To this is added a new element: "and sulphur." A visible memento of suffering is seen in "the smoke of their *torment*." So to Abraham looking towards Sodom, as recorded in Gen. xix. 28, "the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace." But in this last passage the word *torment* is not used. Probably when in the morning Abraham looked towards Sodom the agonies of its inhabitants were over. In the passage before us the word *torment* implies clearly consciousness and agony. And we are told that "for ages of ages the smoke of their *torment* goes up." (The Revisers have properly accepted a reading of the Greek text which gives to this prolonged duration special prominence.) Even this does not close the terrible description. A few more words take us almost into that sulphurous flame, and reveal the ceaseless unrest of the sufferers there: "and they have no rest day and night." An announcement of suffering so terrible requires careful specification of the sufferers: "who worship the wild beast and his image, and if any one receives the mark of his name."

This passage recalls at once Isa. xxxiv. 8-10, where, in reference to Edom, the prophet says, "It is the day of Jehovah's vengeance, the year of recompense in the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into sulphur, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever. From generation to generation it

shall lie waste : none shall pass through it for ever and ever." The best commentary on this passage is the desolation which for some two thousand years has rested on the land of Edom. But this remarkable fulfilment at once proves that the prophet's language was not literal, but rhetorical. For no such smoke now goes up. Yet the prophecy is none the less fulfilled in the utter and conspicuous desolation which for long ages has rested on the ancient home of these enemies of Israel. And this awful doom could not, for the moral purposes for which it was given, have been better described than in the words used by the prophet. But the wide difference between the literal meaning of his words and their actual fulfilment warns us not to build accurate statements of doctrine on the pictorial details of unfulfilled prophecy.

This ancient prophecy suggested probably the smoke ascending for ever in the passage before us. The chief point common to the two prophecies is the utter and irreversible ruin foretold, in the one case as the doom of an ancient enemy of Israel, in the other as the doom of those who worship the present evil world.

Comparison suggests, however, points of conspicuous contrast. In the doom of Edom the word *torment* and the other conspicuous marks of actual personal suffering found in Rev. xiv. 10, 11 are altogether wanting. The earlier prophecy speaks only of the desolate country, without any express reference to the punishment and suffering of individuals ; whereas in the later prophecy we have individual sinners, a twofold statement of their

sin, and words teaching clearly the painfulness of their punishment. This marked difference forbids us to bring down the meaning of the later prophecy to that of the earlier.

Another terrible vision in the Book of Revelation is the judgment upon Babylon, another reminiscence of the Book of Isaiah. In Rev. xviii. 7, 8 a voice cries, "Give to her *torment* and mourning. . . . In one day shall come her plagues, death and mourning and famine: and in fire she shall be burnt up." Kings and merchants (*vv.* 9 and 15, a conspicuous repetition) will wail "when they see the smoke of her burning, standing far off because of the fear of her *torment*." This last word, used twice, implies, as we have seen, actual suffering; and indeed makes this the chief feature of the whole picture. But in this passage nothing is said about the duration of the torment.

The mention in Rev. xvii. 9 of "seven mountains on which the woman sits," and the explanation given in *v.* 18, "the woman which thou sawest is the great city which reigns as queen over the kings of the earth," leave no room to doubt that this remarkable prophecy refers to ancient Rome. In the days of the Apostles Rome was as powerful as Babylon ever was; and twice in the first century it was a terrible enemy of the servants of Christ. The motive which prompted the prophecies against Edom and Babylon would prompt equally this prophecy against Rome. But its fulfilment differed much more from the literal meaning of the prophet's words than did the fulfilment of the earlier prophecies.

Nothing like the judgment of the great harlot as here described has ever taken place, or can take place. This is another warning not to build our expectation of the future on the literal meaning of ancient symbolic language.

Still more difficult to understand than the doom pronounced on Babylon is that pronounced in Rev. xix. 20 on the wild beast and the false prophet: "alive they two were cast into the lake of fire burning with sulphur." These words describe the overthrow of a power symbolised as a wild beast which in the previous verse has been described as leading "the kings of the earth and their armies" to war against Christ, who is symbolised as sitting upon a horse. Into the same lake of fire and sulphur, as we read in ch. xx. 10, after the Millennium and the Great Apostasy the devil was cast. And we are there told that all three "will be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages."

The former passage recalls Num. xvi. 33, where we read that the men who followed Korah, with all they had, "went down living to Sheol (or, Hades); and the earth closed over them, and they perished (LXX. *ἀπώλοντο*) from the midst of the assembly." But these sinners were at once hidden from view; whereas we read of continuous and long-continued torment awaiting the wild beast and the false prophet.

To interpret these figures is very difficult. In themselves, they might be taken as aggregates of individuals. But in what sense such aggregates were cast living into

the lake of fire before the Millennium, we cannot conceive. This warns us that the terrible prophecies of the Book of Revelation were designed, not to gratify our curiosity touching the fate of the wicked, but to deter men from sin.

Into the same lake of fire, as we read in Rev. xx. 13f, were also cast, after they had given up their prey, both Death and Hades and every one who was not found written in the Book of Life.

With ch. xxi. opens a new scene, an absolute and glorious contrast to the verses preceding. Beyond the great white throne and the wreck of the present world, and the fearful doom of sinners, appears, in conspicuous contrast to the city which has passed away in the consuming flame, another city, the New Jerusalem, as a bride adorned for her husband. And in the splendour of that vision, as portrayed in *vv.* 1-7, we seem to forget both sin and its punishment. "He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no longer: neither shall there be any longer mourning, nor cry, nor toil. For the former things have gone away." These words taken alone might suggest a complete extinction of all evil. But that this is not so, we soon learn. Even across this landscape of undimmed glory creeps a dark shadow. From amid that brightness we catch a glimpse of sinners and their awful doom, depicted in the colours already so familiar: "But the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the liars shall have their

part in the lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." The dark shadow is but for a moment, and the bright vision returns. From a lofty mountain we see again the holy city descending out of heaven from God. And as it approaches we mark its lofty walls, its vast proportions, its gates of pearl, its streets of gold, its foundations of precious stones, and its splendour, making needless the light of the sun. But again a dark shadow is flung across the scene, a shadow the deeper because of the brightness of the light intercepted. "There shall not enter into it anything common, and he that maketh an abomination and a lie; but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." Again the shadow vanishes. We see (ch. xxii. 1-5) the river with its trees of life bearing many fruits and leaves of healing. "And there shall be no curse any longer. And the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it. And His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no longer. And they need no light of lamp or light of sun: for the Lord God will give them light. And they shall reign for the ages of the ages."

The vision is over. The angel assures John that "these words are trustworthy and true." And he adds, in *v.* 11, other words of solemn import. "The unrighteous man, let him be unrighteous yet more; and the filthy man, let him be defiled yet more: and the righteous man, let him do righteousness yet more; and the holy man, let him be sanctified yet more." Surely

these words are not addressed to men still living. And, if not, they must describe men contemporaneous with the foregoing visions of glory. This is confirmed by *v.* 15. Blessing hastes to follow curse: "Blessed are they who wash their robes in order that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may go in through the gates into the city." But side by side of this blessing we have another vision of punishment: "Outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one who loves and makes a lie."

These deep shadows falling four times across the bright vision with which closes this wonderful Book of Revelation are most significant. Touching some bad men living in his own day, Paul wrote, in Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is destruction." This judgment we now see fulfilled. On the utmost verge of the prophet's farthest vision, and outside the eternal and glorious home of the righteous, we see men who are still characterised by the sins they committed on earth. In former visions we have seen them in actual suffering. And we now see them conspicuously shut out of the blessedness of the city of God.

The teaching of the New Testament about the future punishment of sin is now before us. Several of its writers speak of those condemned in the great day as *destroyed* or *lost*, using a term denoting utter ruin. The same word is used also to describe the present state of the wicked; and is a common synonym for natural

death. This last use of it makes natural death a symbol of both the present and future state of the unsaved.

This ruin is in the Epistles of Paul twice, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the First Epistle of Peter, spoken of as the *end* of the ungodly. This teaching is confirmed by casual yet solemn words of Christ about the fate of Judas; and by a metaphor, found in both the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the fate of the lost is compared to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. All this proves clearly that the writers of the New Testament looked upon the impenitent as finally shut out from the blessedness awaiting the righteous. Against this plain inference, we have in the New Testament nothing to set. We are there frequently taught that God's purpose of salvation includes all men: but we have no assertions or indications that in all men it will be actually accomplished.

The metaphor of the destruction of vegetable matter by fire suggests perhaps the dissipation of the consciousness of the lost. But this suggestion finds no confirmation in the New Testament. For destruction, as the word is used there and elsewhere, does not imply annihilation. And, inasmuch as life is, in the New Testament, much more than existence, the reservation of the word *life*, touching the world to come, to describe the state of the saved does not prove or suggest that others will eventually cease to exist.

About the future state of the lost, except that it will be utter ruin and an absence of all that gives worth to

existence, nothing is said in the Epistles of Paul or in the Fourth Gospel. But we find there, clearly taught, retribution in the day of judgment in proportion to action good and bad. And this implies continued conscious existence: for unconsciousness admits of no degrees. But it does not imply endless consciousness. In the Synoptist Gospels, the wailing of the lost reveals their actual and acute suffering. But nothing is said about its duration, except that its continuousness is suggested in a metaphor of an undying worm and fire unquenched. We read twice of agelasting fire. But the use of the same phrase elsewhere forbids us to infer from it more than the lasting effect of the fire. We read also of agelasting punishment. But permanent injury or loss, inflicted by a judge in consequence of sin, may be so described even though the subjects of it eventually sink into unconsciousness. On the other hand, the solemn contrast of life and punishment, each agelasting, suggests strongly that in each case the sentence is irreversible.

In the Book of Revelation, actual suffering is much more conspicuous even than in the Synoptist Gospels. The worshippers of the wild beast are in ceaseless torment: and for ages of ages the smoke of their torment goes up. To the ages of the ages also will continue the ceaseless torment of the mysterious object of their worship, of the lying prophet who deceived them, and of the leader whom they followed. The book closes with a sublime picture of the glory of a new heaven and earth, the happy home of the children of God. But across that bright vision deep shadows fall revealing the

continued existence, shut out from the joys of the city of God, of some who in spite of the salvation announced by Christ are still unrighteous and defiled.

To sum up. The writers of the New Testament agree to describe, with more or less definiteness, the punishment to be inflicted in the day of Christ's return as actual suffering and as final exclusion from the blessedness of the saved. They give no ground for hope that the agony of the lost will ever cease: but they do not plainly and categorically assert its endless continuance.

The careful student will notice how much less abundant and decisive is the evidence just recapitulated than is that on which rest the primary doctrines of the Gospel, such as the divinity of Christ, salvation through His death and through faith, and the new life in the Spirit of God. According to our need we have received. The historical foundations of the Gospel of pardon are immovable and broad. And the teaching of Christ and His Apostles about the future punishment of sin is abundantly sufficient for the moral purposes it had in view; but is not sufficient for dogmatic assertion by us touching the exact destiny of the lost.

LECTURE XVI

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

BEFORE we go on to discuss the practical significance of the Biblical evidence now before us, another important doctrine which in all ages has greatly influenced Christian thought, bearing most closely on the future punishment of sin, claims our attention.

Plato teaches frequently, and represents Socrates as teaching, that the soul of man is in its own nature "immortal and indestructible." This he argues plainly in his *Phædo* 105e—107c, also in his *Republic* bk. x. 608d—611b, and elsewhere. He uses such terms as *ψυχὴ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον* and *ἀθάνατος ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ οὐδέποτε ἀπόλλυται*, and much similar language. His arguments leave no room to doubt that he means to assert that for good or ill human consciousness will not and cannot cease. This doctrine, he uses as a moral warning. So *Phædo* 107c: "If the soul is really immortal, what care should be taken of her, not only in respect of the portion of time which is called life, but of eternity! And the danger of neglecting her from this point of view does indeed appear to be awful. If death had only been the end of all, the wicked would

have had a good bargain in dying, for they would have been happily quit not only of their body but of their own evil together with their souls. But now, inasmuch as the soul is manifestly immortal, there is no release or salvation from evil except the attainment of the highest virtue and wisdom." On pp. 113d—114c he describes the torment of the wicked, from which in some but not in all cases there is no deliverance; and the blessings awaiting the righteous. A still more graphic picture of judgment and a more awful description of the sufferings of the wicked are given in the *Republic* bk. x. 614b—616a.

This teaching that the soul of man is immortal is reproduced, but on an immeasurably lower moral plane, in bk. i. of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*. He uses in arts. 11, 14, 32 the phrase *immortalitas animorum* or "immortality of souls." In art. 16 he writes that "Pherecydes, a Syrian, first said that the souls of men are eternal" (*animos esse hominum sempiternos*); that his disciple Pythagoras held the same opinion; and that Plato was said to have come to Italy and there learnt the Pythagorean teaching "about the eternity of souls" (*de animorum æternitate*). In art. 32 Cicero speaks of the Stoics as saying that human souls survive death, but not for ever: *aiunt manere animos, cum e corpore excesserint, sed non semper.* Cicero accepts and indeed quotes (e.g. in art. 23 we have a long quotation from the *Phædrus*) Plato's metaphysical arguments for the endless permanence of the human soul. But, of Plato's conspicuous and noble teaching of moral

retribution beyond death, he has but slight hold. He rather looks upon bodily life as an evil, and death as a release from it; thus contradicting Plato. On the moral issues involved, he seems to have thought little.

Josephus (*Wars* bk. ii. 8. 11) reports that the Pharisees believed that "the bodies are indeed corruptible and their substance not abiding, but that the souls continue immortal always;" that the souls of the righteous pass the ocean to a place of rest and blessing, but that the wicked go to a subterranean abode "full of ceaseless punishments:" τιμωριῶν ἀδιαλείπτων. This teaching, Josephus compares with that of the Greeks. He attributes similar teaching to the Essenes. Also in his *Antiquities* bk. xviii. 1. 3, 5 he says that the Pharisees believed that souls have "immortal strength;" and that the Essenes "make souls to be immortal."

The above-quoted moral teaching of Plato differs conspicuously and in two points from that of the New Testament. The synonymous words *life* and *immortality* denote always in the New Testament a state of blessing; except where the words *life* and *living* refer to our present bodily life. The future state of the lost is never once called *life*: it is the second death. "They who by perseverance in good work seek for glory and honour and incorruption" will receive "eternal life." But the disobedient "will not see life." Plato, on the other hand, attributes immortality to the souls even of the lost; but speaks of it as in their case a curse and not a blessing.

We need not wonder that the lofty moral teaching

of Plato, already accepted by the most devout of the Jewish sects, and re-echoed in some measure by Cicero in the Latin tongue spoken in the Churches of the West, passed easily and imperceptibly into the Christian Church, and moulded its phraseology and thought about the future punishment of sin. Nor need we wonder that the important difference of phraseology just noted, passed unnoticed. None the less have the teaching and phraseology of Plato, thus unconsciously engrafted on the teaching of Christ, been a source of endless confusion and misapprehension in Christian Theology. See further in Note F.

Another still more important difference between the teaching of Plato and that of Christ and the New Testament is that the Bible never traces the eternal life promised to the righteous to any intrinsic and endless permanence of the human soul. Man was created neither immortal nor mortal, but *living*. Upon his own obedience depended (Gen. ii. 7) the continuance of that blessed state. As is well stated in Wisdom ii. 23, "God created man for incorruption:" but whether in each case His purpose will be accomplished, depends upon the man himself. Human life as first created, and life eternal in Christ, are, like the eternal life of the Son of God, an outflow of the life of Him "who alone has immortality." No other life or immortality except this, does man need for his highest blessedness: and no other is ever mentioned or referred to in the Bible.

Some have appealed to the wide-spread yearning for

and anticipation of a life beyond the grave which has found expression in literature ancient and modern. But this is small proof that in all cases this desire and anticipation will be realised, even when existence has become an unmixed evil. Others again have argued that the nature of the soul is simple and therefore incapable of dissolution. But who knows this? Even in bodily life consciousness is not always continuous. It is very often interrupted for a longer or shorter time by sleep or sickness or accident. To say that God cannot finally extinguish that which is so often extinguished for a time, is seriously to limit the Creator's power. Certainly, He who out of unconsciousness and non-existence called both human consciousness and the simplest forms of matter can send them back to the non-existence from which they came. Moreover if God gave to man a nature incapable of extinction, He did so in view of all consequences. Look at it as we may, if human consciousness will in all cases continue throughout an endless succession of ages, it does so simply and only because this is the will of God. That this is His will we have no proof within or without the Bible. A doctrine thus destitute of foundation must be carefully eliminated from the whole subject before us.

On the other hand, the writers of the New Testament, who never assert the essential and endless permanence of human consciousness, and assert frequently that the future life of men is contingent on their present action, never assert that their future existence is so contingent.

For, to them, life is much more than existence. Consequently, loss of life does not necessarily involve loss of conscious existence.

Notice also that the phrase "immortality of the soul" is in modern literature used sometimes to assert, as the writers of the New Testament always assume, that the soul will survive death; at other times, to assert, as the Bible never asserts or assumes, its essential and endless permanence. This ambiguity in the use of a common phrase has been a source of infinite confusion.

The prevalence, in the Christian Church, of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is due probably to the immense influence of Augustine. This great father was familiar with the systems of the Greek philosophers; and among these gives the palm to Plato. He contradicts Plato's teaching that human souls are pre-existent and without beginning; and meets an argument that whatever had a beginning must have also an end. His whole teaching about the future punishment of sin rests on the assumption that the human soul is immortal. So his *City of God* bk. xiii. 2: "The human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal . . . it is said to be immortal because in some way it does not cease to live and feel." Similarly bk. xxi. 3: "Death will be eternal; since the soul, through not having God, will not be able to live, nor by dying, to escape the pains of the body:" *sempiterna mors erit, quando nec vivere anima poterit Deum non habendo, nec doloribus corporis carere moriendo.* So a little lower. "The soul can suffer pain, and cannot die. Here is found a thing which,

since it has sense of pain, is immortal." And elsewhere frequently.

The Christian doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul is a unique example of an opinion destitute of any foundation in the Bible and in some measure contradicting it, derived only from Greek philosophy, yet held firmly by large numbers of educated and intelligent Christians and Christian teachers and writers on the mistaken supposition that it is taught in the Bible. Its prevalence proves how uncertain is the relation between popular religious opinion and the actual teaching of Christ and the Evangelists and Apostles. The same doctrine is also a remarkable example of one common phrase being used to describe two very different doctrines, one resting on a broad Biblical foundation and the other on uncertain metaphysical inference.

Another error to be carefully avoided is the opinion prevalent in certain circles that all will be lost except those who fulfil certain Christian conditions; e.g. the reception of baptism, or an inward spiritual experience assuring them of the favour of God. This opinion also has no foundation in the Bible. We read in Mark xvi. 16 that "he who has not believed will be condemned;" and in 2 Thess. i. 8 of "vengeance for those who obey not the Gospel." But this implies that the Gospel has been fairly set before them and has been deliberately rejected. These solemn words of Christ and of Paul give us no right to pronounce judgment on persons who have not had our own religious advantages and responsibilities

and our own happy assurance of the pardoning grace of God.

Paul teaches in Rom. ii. 26, 27 that the uncircumcision of some who keep the Law will be reckoned for circumcision, and that they who, taught by nature, fulfil the purpose of the Law will pronounce sentence on some who, with a written law and circumcision, are yet transgressors of law. This can only mean that God will accept their obedience to the law written on their heart, fragmentary and imperfect as that obedience is, and insufficient to be a basis of justification on strict principles of law; and will receive them into His favour and into life eternal. See further under the fourth theory discussed in Lect. XVII. This principle opens a door of hope for many even in Christian countries who have never heard the Gospel in its fulness and power. And it opens a wide door of hope for all in heathen lands who have followed the guiding light which God has put into the hearts of all men.

Another unwarranted belief prevalent in some less instructed Christian circles is that a great majority of those who attain adult age will be lost. Our Lord's teaching in Matt. vii. 13, 14 about the narrow gate and the few who find it and the wide gate and the many who go in thereby is a warning how difficult it is to do right and how easy to do wrong, and of the danger of going with the multitudes around us. But it is a very narrow foundation on which to build an estimate of the proportion saved and lost on the day of judgment.

Christ came into the world, not to satisfy our curiosity about the fate of others, but to show us the path of life, and to dissuade us from the path which leads to destruction. And we have no right to use His words for a purpose for which they were never designed.

The removal of the above incorrect inferences, which have seriously hampered the investigation of the subject before us, leaves a way open for an estimate, in the light of all that bears upon it, of the practical significance of the teaching of the Bible about the future punishment of sin.

LECTURE XVII

THEORIES OF THE FUTURE PUNISHMENT OF SIN

WE have now seen that the various writers of the New Testament agree to teach that utter ruin awaits those who reject the salvation offered by Christ; that the Book of Revelation, and Christ as His words are recorded in the Synoptist Gospels, depict the lost as in actual suffering, and that this is implied in Paul's teaching that punishment will be in proportion to sin. We have found in the New Testament no assertion or reliable suggestion that these sufferings will ever fade into unconsciousness: nor on the other hand have we found any unequivocal assertion that this consciousness of suffering will always continue. In other words, the duration of the actual suffering of the lost is not plainly stated in the New Testament. But we have found in the words of Christ recorded in each of the Four Gospels, and in the Epistles of Paul, assertions implying clearly that some will be finally excluded from the blessedness awaiting the righteous.

With these results of our study of the Bible we will now compare four theories prevalent more or less throughout the Christian era: viz. (1) Endless suffering of the

lost, (2) Final salvation of all men, (3) Ultimate extinction of the lost, (4) Probation after death. These theories we will discuss in the light of the teaching of the New Testament as expounded above, and of whatever else we know about the character of God and about His administration of His Kingdom, thus viewing the topic before us as part of one harmonious revelation of God. Each theory, I shall state in what seems to me its strongest form, and shall support by the strongest arguments I can find. The statements and arguments actually used by their advocates, I shall reserve to be discussed in the notes at the end of this volume.

1. Since the latter part of the second century, until recent years, the prevalent belief and teaching of the Christian Church has been that the doom pronounced on the day of judgment will be endless suffering. And this has been accepted as the teaching of the New Testament. The lost are there depicted as in actual torment. No limit to their suffering is suggested, except perhaps in the uncertain metaphor of destruction by fire. But this metaphor involves, as does other similar teaching, their final exclusion from the glory of heaven. Christ speaks of eternal fire and eternal punishment. And in the Book of Revelation the smoke of the torment of those who worship the wild beast goes up for ages of ages, and the beast and false prophet are cast into a lake of fire where they will be tormented for the ages of the ages. All this has been interpreted to mean that the suffering of the lost will have no end.

This popular belief has received subtle support from the equally prevalent doctrine, discussed in the last lecture, of the essential and endless permanence of the human soul and of human consciousness. For if the human soul be essentially permanent, the various statements in various parts of the New Testament which assert or imply the final exclusion of the lost from the blessedness of heaven imply also their endless suffering. The all-searching light of eternity, revealing in its reality whatever has been done on earth, will make the consciousness of the lost to be intolerable regret and shame for inexcusable and awful folly and sin. The permanence of consciousness under such circumstances can be no other than endless torment.

We have already seen that this doctrine, commonly called "the immortality of the soul," has no place in the Bible, and no adequate evidence elsewhere. Consequently, it cannot be appealed to in support of the endless suffering of the lost. The only ground on which this last doctrine can rest securely is the clear teaching of the Bible. What is this teaching?

In the Epistles of Paul and Peter and John and in the Fourth Gospel, we have important teaching about the doom of the lost, implying actual suffering. But we have found there no statement or indication of its duration. Their silence on this subject is most significant.

We turn to the Synoptist Gospels. In not one of the seven passages in which Christ speaks of "wailing and gnashing of teeth" does He say that it will be for ever, or without end. Against the doubtful metaphor

of an undying worm and unquenched fire must be set another metaphor which compares the doom of the lost to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire, thus suggesting their absolute extinction. This apparent contradiction warns us not hastily to build important doctrine on metaphor. We have seen that punishment does not necessarily imply continued consciousness. Moreover, the cognate words rendered *eternal* and *for ever* are frequently in the Old Testament used to describe the ordinances of the Mosaic ritual which have long ago passed away. The phrase *eternal fire* is used, even in the New Testament, to describe the fire which destroyed Sodom; and similar language is used in the Old Testament to describe the coming desolation of Edom.

The dramatic pictures of the Book of Revelation are an uncertain basis for accurate doctrine. The smoke of the torment of the lost is seen going up for ages of ages: a lasting monument of their fate. But this does not necessarily imply that their actual torment is equally lasting. The agelasting torment of the devil, whose sin has been agelasting, is not necessarily a pattern of the fate of his victims. Nor is the like punishment of the mysterious wild beast and the false prophet. In other words, we do not find, throughout the whole Bible, any clear assertion of the endless suffering of the lost.

Very serious reasons warn us not lightly, by accepting the theory before us, to go beyond the clear and decisive teaching of the Bible.

To many godly and thoughtful men, the doom of endless suffering, involving endless permanence of evil, has seemed irreconcilable with the love, and even the justice, of God. And some of them have for this reason, vindicating as they think the character of God, dismissed the theory before us as inconceivable and impossible.

This objection demands respectful consideration. For throughout the Bible God claims, even in His punishment of sin, the approval of men. And the homage paid by our moral sense to the character and teaching of Christ is an all-important witness to His supreme authority. Even in our interpretation of His recorded words, the cultivated moral sense of those educated in His school claims a hearing. For His severest condemnation finds meek response in every devout heart. We must be very careful not to wound this reverent approval of the justice of God.

On the other hand, we must not forget that even the law of God written (Rom. ii. 15) in the hearts of men is liable to be misinterpreted by fallible human judgment. Our Lord foretold, as recorded in John xvi. 2, a time when they who kill His disciples will think that they are serving God. This error and others less serious forbid us to make our sense of the due proportion of sin and punishment a measure of the punishment awaiting sinners. The facts with which we are acquainted, an infinitesimal part of the whole, are insufficient for decisive and reliable judgment: and for such judgment we are altogether unfit.

Various attempts have been made to remove the difficulties referred to above. In my view, they are unsuccessful. In all ages, the profound mystery of the existence of evil has perplexed the mind of man. But this difficulty is somewhat lessened by our observation that frequently suffering and even temptation to sin have been a means of moral discipline, and thus of benefit to those who suffer and are tempted. The theory before us involves the immensely greater difficulty of the endlessness of suffering. It implies that God will inflict on the wicked a punishment which will perpetuate evil in the form of suffering and in some sense of sin, and maintain an existence which has become an unmixed and unspeakable curse, for endless ages after His purpose of mercy has been fully accomplished.

Doubtless the future punishment of sin will serve a moral purpose. But, so far as we can judge, endlessness of suffering cannot be needful, either for the lost, for whom there is no amendment, or for the saved, who cannot need for their instruction in righteousness an endless continuance of this painful lesson.

It may be said, in reply to the objection we are considering, that endless suffering is an inevitable result of man's sin. But, surely, this is a proposition difficult to establish; and is in any case an affirmation going far beyond our knowledge or capacity. For his rejection of salvation, the sinner alone is responsible. But the penalty of rejection cannot be put outside the will of God. If endless suffering be the punishment of sin, it is because this doom was approved by the infinite wisdom and love of God. In other words, nothing

is gained by these attempts to minimise the serious difficulties which, to perplexed and fallible human judgment, surround the theory of the endless suffering of the lost.

On the other hand, taken at their full value, the above objections seem to me insufficient for confident denial of this theory. For other considerations, in an opposite direction, also demand attention.

We are bound, under penalty of severe self-condemnation, to prevent sin to the utmost of our power. Especially are we bound to prevent one person from leading another into sin, and to protect the innocent against the violence of the wicked. Yet the omnipotence and wisdom and love of God do not prevent men from sinning and from leading others into sin, and permit the righteous sometimes to suffer because they are good and others bad.

Moreover, the consequences of sin are frequently tremendous beyond all human sense of the proportion of sin and punishment. And we are sometimes appalled at the long continuance of these consequences. One transgression often produces results immeasurably beyond what either bad or good men anticipate. A single wrong step sometimes blights with hopeless ruin the whole course of subsequent life. And, stranger still, sometimes the sufferer feels that his long-continued and terrible punishment is but a due reward of his sin. These consequences frequently follow, so far as we can see, without any compensating moral gain to the sufferer or to others; in some cases, by what seems like a mechanical sequence moving irresistibly and mercilessly forward to an inevitable doom, yet carrying

with it the condemnation of the sinner's own conscience.

This apparently merciless sequence of sin and awful suffering not unfrequently contradicts our sense of humanity and justice. It thus reveals the infinite difference, amid important analogies, between the rule of God, in whose hands are all things and to whom all things are known, and all human conceptions of justice and mercy. This difference does not remove the serious objections mentioned above; but it warns us to use utmost caution in drawing inferences, even by way of objection, touching the future punishment of sin, from the character of God and His mode of administration.

All that we can safely say, in view of the deep shadow which conceals from us the consequences of sin, is that the difficulties involved in the theory of the endless suffering of the lost are a very strong reason for most searching examination of the authority on which it rests. And, as we have seen, there is nothing in the Bible sufficient to justify a confident assertion of a theory surrounded by objections so serious.

The prevalence in the Church of the theory before us has little weight. The subject was never discussed in the undivided Church, nor was it formulated in the ancient creeds. The philosophy of Plato was the noblest school of thought in the ancient world. From him Augustine and others learnt the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. See on p. 199. Read in the light of this doctrine there is much in the New Testament

which implies the endless torment of the lost. And this endless torment was plainly taught by Augustine. See his *City of God* bk. xxi. 9, 11, 17, 23. For, practically, the one doctrine involves the other. He taught also, with complete confidence, that unbaptised infants will be lost. To the same great father we owe, in no small measure, the terrible doctrine of unconditional election and predestination. See his treatise, *Reproof and Grace* ch. viii. 18.

The prevalence of this theory does not throw on those who object to it the burden of disproof. For he who speaks in God's name is bound to prove that his words come from God. Otherwise they have no authority.

For works advocating this first theory of the future punishment of sin, see Notes G, H, I, J.

2. Some have asserted or suggested, with more or less confidence, that all men will eventually be saved. They remind us that Christ taught frequently that God is our Father, the loving Father even of the prodigal son, and that no father would permit his children to perish if he could possibly save them ; that God is able to reveal even to the most obtuse the infinite evil of sin, to soften the hardest heart, and to lead back to Himself those who have gone furthest astray ; that the highest aim of punishment is amendment, that where it does not produce amendment this highest aim is not accomplished, and that the final destruction of the lost would be the final and awful failure of the purpose and effort of God. Such failure seems to them inconceivable. They there-

fore suppose or hope that the punishment inflicted on the day of judgment will be designed to lead the punished ones to repentance and to life; and that in all cases this purpose will ultimately be accomplished. This argument implies the final salvation of the devil and his angels. For they also are creatures of God: and He who can do all things can save them.

Like the theory of the endless suffering of the lost, this theory of universal restoration receives subtle and powerful support from the prevalent and popular theory of the essential and endless permanence of human consciousness. For this last theory leaves no alternative except either endless suffering or the ultimate salvation of all. Each side of this alternative has been accepted by not a few as the only way of escape from the other. This one theory has thus become a foundation for two other mutually contradictory theories. But we have seen that the underlying theory is itself without foundation. It is therefore a treacherous foundation for the others; and must be carefully eliminated from the whole case now before us.

We have found in the New Testament many assertions or clear indications that some men will be finally excluded from the happy family of God. If the theory before us be correct, the Apostles were in serious error in this important matter; and the agreement of all Four Gospels leaves no room to doubt that the incarnate Son was Himself also in error. An hypothesis involving an inference so unlikely cannot be tolerated for a moment unless demanded by decisive evidence. What

is the evidence? It is an appeal to the infinite power of God who is able to reveal, even to the most obdurate, the infinite evil of sin and thus lead him back to penitence and obedience; and to the infinite love which moved God to give His Son to die for all men.

Such appeal at once claims our respectful attention A similar appeal, I have already admitted in reference to the theory of the endless suffering of the lost. But the cases differ widely. The endless suffering of the lost and their maintenance in consciousness for long ages after consciousness has become worse than worthless are much more difficult to harmonize with the love of God than is their final exclusion from the City of God. We can conceive a case in which we should respect a royal father for condemning his son to death. And we have no right to say that God will not inflict the extreme penalty of final exclusion from heaven.

The cases differ also in that this final exclusion is plainly asserted by Christ and His Apostles, whereas the endless torment of the wicked is never clearly taught in the Bible.

All around us we see, permitted by God, much which no human father would permit. If we had the power, we should save our children from going into sin. Yet God, who has all power, permits sin. Some will reply that God permits it for a time, fully resolved ultimately to bring back the erring one to righteousness. To assert this is to deny that God can or does commit a man's final destiny to his own choice. It limits man's free agency to a choice of a longer or shorter, a more

or less painful, course of discipline. But we have no proof that the scope of man's free determination is thus limited. It is conceivable that God, who has evidently committed so much of man's destiny to his own action, may have committed to him his ultimate destiny. Certainly we have no right to deny that He has done so; and therefore we have no right to infer from God's power and love, and from the universality of His purpose of mercy, that all men will ultimately be saved. Still less right have we to contradict, on these grounds, the decisive teaching of Christ and the Apostles.

See further in Lect. XI.

The only remaining argument is that perhaps the whole purpose of God touching those who reject the salvation offered in the Gospel was not revealed to the writers of the New Testament, that behind the threatenings therein contained lies hidden in the breast of God a secret purpose of mercy even for those about whom no word of mercy was spoken by the Apostles or by Christ. This suggestion, I am in no haste dogmatically to pronounce impossible. Far be it from me to limit the mercy of God. But how unsubstantial is the basis on which this hope rests! It has no better foundation than man's conception of what he would do were he in God's place. And the worthlessness of this conception as a basis of expectation touching the future action of God is revealed in the fact, manifest to all, that before our eyes in His government of the world God is ever doing and permitting what no human father or king would do or permit. This intangible hope

of a mercy of which we find no trace in the covenant of mercy and in the record of God's infinite love lies beyond the range of practical theology. It has no place in the revealed truth of God. See Notes K, L, M.

Of the two theories now before us, the former is not contradicted by, although going beyond, the teaching of the Bible. But it lies open to serious objection based on the revealed character of God. The second theory contradicts the teaching of several writers of the New Testament and of Christ as His words are there recorded ; and has no reliable basis, direct or indirect, in the whole Bible or elsewhere. It is simply a very uncertain appeal to a purpose of mercy altogether hidden from, and inferentially rejected by, Christ and His Apostles.

3. Others have suggested that, although the punishment inflicted on the great day will be actual suffering, this suffering will ultimately fade into unconsciousness. And some have confidently claimed that this ultimate extinction of consciousness is expressly and frequently taught in the New Testament. They appeal to the word *destruction* frequently used there to describe the future punishment of sin, and assert that it implies ultimate extinction ; and to the phrase *eternal life* which everywhere describes a blessing reserved for the faithful servants of Christ. They also appeal to the metaphor of destruction of vegetable matter by fire as among natural phenomena the nearest approach to annihilation. Their strongest Biblical argument is their contention that the natural immortality of the soul has no place in Holy Scripture.

But we have seen that destruction does not necessarily involve annihilation, but only utter ruin. If elsewhere the future punishment of sin were described as extinction, it might suitably be spoken of as destruction: for, wherever existence is worth having, extinction is absolute ruin. But endless suffering would be a still more awful ruin; and might therefore with equal appropriateness be described as destruction. We have also seen that life is more than existence; and that therefore the absence of life does not necessarily imply non-existence. The only remaining argument from the Bible is the metaphor of destruction by fire: and we have seen that metaphor is a most uncertain basis for important doctrine. Moreover, to overturn popular error does not necessarily prove the truth of, or even support, some contrary theory. Thus fail all proofs that the Bible teaches the ultimate extinction of the wicked.

On the other hand, this theory is not explicitly contradicted in the Bible. For, although its writers frequently assert, and imply still more frequently, the actual suffering of the lost, and their final exclusion from heaven, they stop short of asserting in so many words that these sufferings will be endless. This I have already shown, both in my exposition of the teaching of the New Testament and in my discussion in this lecture of the theory (No. 1) of endless suffering. In other words, between the first and third theories here discussed, the sacred writers, while apparently inclining sometimes to one and sometimes to the other, do not pronounce decisive judgment.

Against the theory now before us, looked upon simply as mere speculation destitute of any solid support in the Bible or elsewhere, no serious objection can be brought. It would leave room for the acute suffering depicted in the New Testament; and for punishment in proportion to sin. Extinction of human consciousness cannot be rejected as impossible and inconceivable. For no small part of human life is passed in unconsciousness. And, certainly, whether in its nature it be composite or uncompounded, He who called out of unconsciousness and non-existence both the human soul and the simplest forms of matter can, if He will, send them back to the non-existence from which He called them. To deny this, is to impose on the power of the Creator an impossible limit. Nor can it be objected that extinction would be, not punishment, but relief. It would be punishment tempered with mercy. As involving loss of the endless blessedness for which man was created, extinction is endless and infinite punishment. For its result will never cease. But, for those to whom, through their rejection of the salvation offered by Christ, existence has become an intolerable burden, extinction would be an act of mercy. So, in a contrary direction, the actual death of Christ upon the cross was deliverance from the curse and burden of man's sin: looked at from another point of view, it was a supreme act of self-sacrifice. That extinction is contrary to the creative purpose of God, is no difficulty. For that purpose was primarily one of mercy. This mercy was made contingent on man's obedience.

Through his sin, the chief part of the purpose, viz. infinite and endless mercy, was thwarted. And we have no right to infer that, in spite of this failure, the subordinate part of the purpose, viz. endless existence, must necessarily be accomplished.

That the theory before us is a less powerful deterrent from sin than is the theory of endless torment, can scarcely be urged as an objection. It would render equal support to every exaggerated picture of material fire. Our duty is, not to invent deterrents, but to use those revealed to us by God. Moreover, no deterrent is effective except so far as it commands the homage of the moral sense of man. Whatever teaching does not so commend itself is thereby discredited, and weakened as a moral force. We gain nothing in any way by exaggerating the teaching of Holy Scripture.

This third theory does not lie open to the very serious objections which beset the theory of endless suffering. It does not involve the endless persistence of evil; nor, however terrible extinction may be to those created for endless blessedness, does it present to the moral sense the very great difficulties involved in the popular theory. And it permits us to look forward to a time when from the entire universe sin and sorrow will have alike vanished. The relief thus afforded and the prospect thus opened give to this theory a certain attractiveness.

These arguments in its favour seem to me, however, in the absence of any clear support in the Bible, and in view of the scantiness of our knowledge of the

essential nature of the human soul, an altogether insufficient basis for confident belief or even plausible conjecture. For there may be another alternative altogether beyond our thought. The evidence before us is insufficient for reliable decision. Nor need we wonder at our uncertainty. Had the ancient prophets formulated a definite theory of the glorious kingdom which they dimly foresaw, how unlike it would have been to the reality! But their visions were of infinite value as a bright light shining in a dark place, a light sufficient to guide the steps of all faithful servants of God. The visions of the New Testament were not designed to gratify our curiosity touching the fate of the lost; but to warn us against a path which leads to ruin. This definite aim is not obscured by their indefiniteness. Christ and His Apostles teach plainly that they who reject the Gospel will perish in the darkness of endless night: and under that impenetrable gloom their fate lies hidden. This is all we know: and it is enough.

The chief, perhaps the only, value of speculations such as the above is that a variety of theories warns us against confident dogmatic assertion. The relief we need from the difficulties involved in the future punishment of sin must be sought in another direction. See Notes N, O, P.

4. Inasmuch as many persons have lived and died without hearing the Gospel of Christ, others have heard it only imperfectly set forth, and many have throughout life been in circumstances most unfavourable to morality

and religion, it has been suggested that for such persons there will be probation after death and that to them will be given another offer of salvation. This is another speculative attempt to mitigate the difficulties involved in current theology. It contradicts a popular belief that the fate of every one is determined at death.

Of probation after death, we have no hint in the entire Bible. Appeal has been made to 1 Peter iii. 19, where we read that at His death Christ made a proclamation to some who were disobedient in the days of Noah; and to ch. iv. 6, where we read of good news announced to the dead. But no one has yet given even a plausible exposition of what these difficult passages mean: and, to build doctrine on obscure passages, is most dangerous. Moreover proclamation of good news after death does not necessarily imply or suggest further probation.

On the other hand, there is little or nothing in the Bible to contradict this suggestion. In 2 Cor. v. 10 we read that "all must needs appear before the judgment-seat of Christ in order that each may receive the things done through the instrumentality of the body." This proves that Paul looked upon the judgment as dealing chiefly or only with actions done on earth. But this uncertain inference is insufficient to support a theological argument. Touching probation beyond the grave, for it or against it, the Bible says nothing.

The theory before us is prompted by the apparent unfairness, in many cases, of the present probation. It is said that none can be condemned for rejecting the

Gospel till it has been presented to them in its fulness and power; and that since this is not done in the present life there must be probation beyond the grave. This implies that the only ground of condemnation in the great day will be rejection of the Gospel. But another ground of punishment and another basis of judgment are given in Rom. ii. 12-16. "So many as have sinned in law will be judged by means of law:" i.e. they who have the Law of Moses will be acquitted or condemned by Christ (*v.* 16) according to their attitude towards it. On the other hand, "so many as have sinned apart from law will also perish apart from law:" i.e. their destruction will be independent of the Law. On what basis they will be judged, is stated in *vv.* 14, 15, where we read that they who have no external law have a law written in their hearts. That, judged by this standard, some will be acquitted is implied in Paul's question in *v.* 26, "If the uncircumcision guard (i.e. carefully obey) the decrees of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?" and in the assertion following, "And the uncircumcision derived from nature, fulfilling the Law, shall judge thee who with letter and circumcision art a transgressor of law." This can only mean that some who have only the light of the inborn moral sense, but follow it, will be accepted in the great day, while some Jews will be cast out. Such acceptance of them does not contradict the statement in Rom. iii. 20 that "by works of law no flesh will be justified." For neither Jew nor heathen could do works which merit salvation.

But Paul implies that God, who graciously accepts our faith in Christ as the condition of His favour, will also accept from them obedience to the light they had, imperfect and fragmentary though it be, as a condition of their salvation. In any case, we have here a standard other than the Gospel by which will be determined the awards of the day of judgment. And, if so, a similar standard will doubtless be applied to many in Christian countries whose environment has been unfavourable. Even amid the deepest moral darkness around, each one has an inborn light. Where the Gospel is fully preached, that light will guide towards Christ. But in every case, as each one turns towards or away from that light, dim as it may be, will he enter the light of life or sink beneath the gloom of the second death.

If, as Paul's teaching implies, there is for each one in the present life an adequate probation, i.e. a sufficient test of his loyalty to that which he knows to be right and good, we have no need or right to expect a probation beyond death. This suggestion is another result of supposing that none will be saved except those who by conscious faith accept the Gospel of Christ. And this supposition has no foundation in the teaching of Christ or His Apostles.

Touching idiots and those who die in infancy, we know nothing. Their case lies outside the Gospel of Christ. But they will be dealt with by His wisdom and love.

Probation beyond the grave, even if taught in the Bible, would not relieve the serious difficulties which

surround the future punishment of sin. For, in a future probation, some might fail, just as in most favourable moral surroundings some now live bad lives and die in sin. And the fate of these would present the same difficulty as does the moral failure of men on earth. To suggest that they will be kept under repeated probation till all bow to Christ, is simply another form of universalism; and as such has been already discussed.

To sum up. Theories 2, 3, 4 are attempts to remove or lessen the difficulties involved in Theory 1. This last has been the traditional and popular theory of the Christian pulpit during long ages; but it goes beyond the plain teaching of the Bible, under the influence of a metaphysical theory which has no place there, and thus needlessly raises most serious difficulties. The other theories have no foundation in the Bible, or solid foundation elsewhere. They are mere guesses, more or less plausible, designed to remove difficulties real or imaginary in the future punishment of sin. But they differ greatly in their relation to the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. To this teaching, the second theory gives flat contradiction. Neither the first, third, nor fourth theory contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible; but the third theory avoids most serious objections to which the first theory lies open. The fourth theory removes no serious difficulty; and is therefore, even as a speculation, of no practical value.

The real difficulties involved in the actual teaching of the Bible about the future punishment of sin, I shall discuss in our next lecture.

LECTURE XVIII

THE RESULT

WE have seen that the writers of the New Testament agree to teach frequently and conspicuously that beyond the grave exact retribution awaits every one for all actions done in the present life; and that Paul indicates one all-important element of that retribution, viz. the revelation, to each one and to others, of his actions and their results and of his own character, in the intense reality of eternity. We notice also that this revelation and retribution are represented as taking place, not at death, but for the whole race at one definite time in the future.

To this doctrine of retribution, no objection can be made. Every loving father and every righteous king punishes those who do amiss. Such just punishment claims our respect; whereas failure to punish evokes severe condemnation. The impartial justice of God as depicted throughout the Bible secures at once the homage of our moral sense. And so does the exact retribution beyond the grave so conspicuous in the teaching of Christ and His Apostles.

The various writers of the New Testament and Christ

as His words are there recorded divide the human race at the last judgment into two widely separated classes. The one class will be received into a glory on which falls no shadow; and the other will be banished into a darkness in which we look in vain for one ray of light. Between these classes stands an impassable barrier. To our view, this dual division presents difficulties. It finds no place for a large number of persons who seem to us unworthy of either blessedness or destruction. This difficulty, the New Testament does nothing to remove or mitigate. Christ promises to all who put faith in Him eternal life with God. But, having said all we need for our own salvation, He does nothing to satisfy our curiosity about the destiny of the persons just referred to. We must leave them to the wisdom and love of our Father in heaven.

The various writers of the New Testament describe the punishment to be inflicted on the great day as ruin, utter and hopeless and final. The Synoptist Gospels also represent Christ as teaching, and the Book of Revelation teaches in plain and awful language, that the lost will suffer acute and continuous pain. This actual suffering is implied in the teaching of the Fourth Gospel and of Paul that retribution will be according to works. For proportionate retribution involves degrees of punishment: and degrees of punishment imply consciousness; for unconsciousness is alike to all. Moreover consciousness of endless and glorious life forfeited through our own inexcusable folly and

sin involves remorse and mental anguish beyond conception Even in human life on earth, remorse has often been more terrible than bodily suffering. To escape from the visible consequences of their sin, and from the intolerable burden of a consciousness of their baseness, men have sought refuge in the gloom of death. How vain this attempt, even heathen philosophers have taught. To be compelled, in the unsparing light of eternity, to contemplate our own past sins, when all fascination of sin has worn away, and our rejection of the infinite love of God and our consequent and deserved loss of the glories of heaven, and this without room for amendment or hope of restoration, will be an undying worm and unquenchable fire. In other words, the vivid pictures in the Synoptist Gospels and in the Book of Revelation do but delineate a necessary inference from teaching permeating the entire New Testament.

Of this acute suffering of the lost, the writers of the New Testament see no end ; nor do they teach anything which logically implies, or even suggests, that it will ever end. On the other hand, they do not go so far as expressly and indisputably to assert the endless permanence of these ruined and wretched ones, and the consequent endlessness of their torment. The curtain is raised for a moment, revealing the anguish of the lost ; and then falls, hiding them from our view.

This picture of judgment reveals to us intelligent persons created by God in order that they may share His endless blessedness, yet, through their own sin and their rejection of salvation from sin, shut out,

without hope of return, from the glory and happiness for which they were created.

To this teaching, no objection can be made on the ground of the character of God. It cannot be objected that His purpose will be defeated. For His purpose in creating man was to make his final blessedness contingent on submission to, and cheerful acceptance of, the guidance of God. Nor can we object to the doom of the lost on the ground of the justice of God. For, of no one case, are all the facts before us. We know not the greatness of the sins which will be punished by exclusion from the glory of God; and therefore cannot compare the sin and its punishment. The analogy of parental and royal love forbids us to say that the love of God is inconsistent with severe punishment of sin, or indeed with the final exclusion of sinners from the happy family of God. On the other hand, the principles of human justice and the tenderness of human love warn us not to put into the threatenings of the Bible more than its words legitimately convey.

Such is the result of our study of the teaching of the Bible about the Future Punishment of Sin.

Possibly some of my readers will be disappointed that I have not found in the New Testament decisive proof of the endless and essential permanence of human consciousness, and proof that torment enduring throughout an endless succession of ages awaits the lost. In this direction I have not ventured to go further than the grammatical meaning, and a careful exposition, of the words of the New Testament reveal a firm ground

on which to tread. For in a subject so profoundly solemn and involving issues so great it seemed to me better to fall within rather than go one step beyond the teaching of Holy Scripture. If I have fallen short, let others supply my deficiency. But they can do so effectively only by expounding the teaching of the Bible.

Others will be still more profoundly disappointed that I have not found some assured mitigation of the punishment threatened to sinners, either in the way of hope of ultimate restoration of the lost to the favour of God or at least by silent extinction of a consciousness which will have become an intolerable burden. For such alleviation of punishment, we have carefully sought; but in vain. Christ and His Apostles, and the Spirit of Inspiration, have not thought fit, as I read their words, to give even one ray of hope for the lost, even the poor hope of endless sleep. And we are left face to face with the fact that the writers of the New Testament agree to teach that the doom of those who persist in refusing the salvation offered by Christ is utter and hopeless and final ruin, but say nothing further about their ultimate state.

Before that vision of ruin, even for the worst of men, all human thought quails. We dare not contemplate the doom of one lost soul. From that awful vision of judgment, we have sought refuge in the Book of God. But its iron gates of threatening have mercilessly repelled us. Where shall our baffled anxiety turn? To whom shall our thought fly for refuge?

We will fly for refuge, and we shall find refuge, in the infinite love of our Father in heaven, the Creator and Father of us and of all men. The lost are in His hands. No doom will be pronounced on them except through the lips of Him who shed His blood to save from death every child of Adam. No punishment will be inflicted except by His infinite wisdom and love. If I have misinterpreted His purposes, the Judge Himself will make no mistake. But His wisdom and our ignorance warn us not hastily to assert what He will do. In speaking of His judgment we must carefully keep our language within the limits of the indisputable teaching of Holy Scripture. And, for a solution of the many difficulties which at present that teaching seems to involve, we must wait till the morning breaks and the shadows flee away. In that day even the punishment of sin will be seen to be a part of the infinite mercy of God. And, in full view of all the facts of the case, our voice will swell the "great shout of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; salvation and glory and power belong to our God: for TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ARE HIS JUDGMENTS."

PART IV

THE ETERNAL GLORY

LECTURE XIX

THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

BEYOND the pictures of judgment painted in lurid colours on the pages of the New Testament rises ever a vision of glory. In 1 Thess. iv. 17, after describing the resurrection of "the dead in Christ," Paul adds, "and in this way always with the Lord we shall be." Still more conspicuously, in Rev. vi. 12—vii. 17, after the dissolution of nature and the wail of the lost, we see a great multitude who have washed their robes and now rest with God. Similarly, in ch. xiv. 1-5, after a vision of a wild beast who claims idolatrous worship from all, we see and hear harpers singing a new song. And, in still more glorious form, after a tremendous vision of judgment in Rev. xx. 11-15, we see in chs. xxi. and xxii. a new heaven and earth, the city of God, and the river of the water of life. This vision of glory, the peaceful goal of all the effort and conflict and

weariness and sorrow of earth, will be the closing scene of our study of the Last Things.

This subject presents difficulties in some respects greater than those involved in the future punishment of sin. It deals with good things unseen by mortal eye, and therefore to us inconceivable. For all our concrete thoughts are shaped by what we have seen and heard. But the matters now before us pertain to a life to come much further beyond our thought than are the cares and joys of manhood beyond the dreams of childhood. And how little a child knows of the inner life of the men and women he sees around him! Yet he knows something: and a boy's imperfect anticipations of manhood have often been a stimulus to persevering effort. So may we hope that, although we be but children looking forward to something of which we know very little, a study of the outlines of glory traced on the pages of Holy Scripture may be to us a guide and encouragement along the narrow path which leads to life immortal.

The first element of the New Heaven and Earth which comes into view consists of the risen bodies of the saved. These must be material forms. For we read that the sea and Death and Hades gave up the dead in them. They could give up only that which was in their grasp, i.e. something other than spirit. For the spirits of the saved are already with God. The only meaning we can attach to this surrender is that the bodies which lay dead in the sea and the grave returned to life; or at least that the spirits of the dead

were again clothed in forms analogous to our present bodies. And, if so, these material forms must belong to the new universe then coming into being.

This use of the term *material* is not discredited by our ignorance of what matter really is. For, whatever be their essential distinction, the contrast of mind and matter underlies all human thought and life. These are ever related as the inner and the outer, the higher and the lower. To speak of resurrection bodies of the saved, is to claim that their permanent condition will be, like human life now, dual, consisting of inner and outer, of higher and lower.

This duality of the life of the risen servants of Christ is taught clearly in 1 Cor. xv. 35-49: "How are the dead raised? and with what kind of body do they come? . . . It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown an animal body; it is raised a spiritual body." The phrase *animal body* means a body related to the *soul*, the principle of animal life. With this is contrasted a *spiritual body*, i.e. one related to the *spirit*, to that element which man has in common with God. This comparison suggests that all merely animal functions will cease, that the material forms of the risen ones will be completely under control of the spirit within, a perfect organ for its self-manifestation. And this we must conceive to be the original purpose of the creation of material forms animated by spirit.

These material forms imply a material environment.

And the prophet who saw the dead standing before God saw also a new heaven and earth, i.e. in addition to the world of spirits, a new material universe. The emphatic repetition of the word *new*, which is used twice in Rev. xxi. 1, "*new* heaven and *new* earth," again in *v.* 2, "*new* Jerusalem," and again in *v.* 5, "behold I make all things *new*," calls attention to the recent creation of the home of the risen ones. Not into an ancient abode, but into a house newly erected, its erection being a new era in the Kingdom of God, will the glorified human children of God be received.

To depict this new and glorious home of the family of God, the prophet uses objects the most beautiful and costly on earth. He sees a city, not rising from earth like those known to us, but coming down from heaven, of immense size, with gates of pearl, streets of gold yet transparent, and foundations of precious stones. So charming is the view that he compares it to a bride adorned for her husband. The bride is the ransomed human race. The pearls and precious stones and gold of the city are but her jewels. The prophet sees a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going forth from the throne of God. And on both banks of it grows the tree of life, bearing each month a different kind of fruit, and with leaves for healing of the nations. Through this vision, dim with excess of light, we see from far a splendour surpassing human thought.

This vision of material beauty excites inquiry touching the life and joy of the inhabitants of this glorious city of God. This curiosity, the sacred writers have done

little to gratify. A few indications are all that we can gather.

One thing however is absolutely certain. Evil of any kind will have no place there. This great deliverance was within the far-reaching view of the prophets of ancient Israel. So Isa. xxxv. 9, 10: "No lion shall be there, nor shall any beast eager for prey go up, they shall not be found there. And the redeemed shall walk: and Jehovah's ransomed ones shall return, and enter Zion with singing, and agelasting joy on their heads. Gladness and joy, they shall obtain: and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Also ch. lx. 20: "Thy sun shall no more go down, and thy moon shall not withdraw itself; and Jehovah shall be to thee an agelasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

Still more clearly is this absence of evil foretold in the great prophetic book of the New Testament. So Rev. vii. 16: "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun fall upon them, nor any burning heat: because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall guide them to fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." Also ch. xxi. 4: "and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes: and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: for the first things have passed away."

The vast significance of this absolute escape from all possibility of suffering passes human thought. We are

so accustomed to evil mingling with good, and sorrow with every joy, that we are grateful when joy exceeds sorrow. In our greatest joy we are ever on our guard against reverse. And this possibility of unexpected reverse is no small diminution of our joy. The visions of the Book of Revelation disclose a life undimmed by sorrow or sin or shadow; a rest for the weary which nothing can for a moment disturb.

This rest for the weary need not surprise us. For our Father in heaven is able to protect His children from all evil and to enrich them with infinite good. The sorrow around is due to sin: and the origin of sin lies hidden in the mystery of human personality. But Christ came to save us from sin: and He will save from all sin all who put trust in Him. We need not wonder that those whom, by His own death on the cross, He saves from sin He will also save from all consequences of sin and restore to the full favour of God. The undimmed brightness of the eternal home of the children of God is but the outshining of His smile.

A favourite phrase, used in each of the Four Gospels, in the Book of Acts, in the Epistles of Paul, and in those of John and Jude, to describe the reward of the righteous, is *eternal* or *agelasting life*.

A distinguishing feature of life wherever found is activity. The normal life of rational beings is intelligent activity. Such must be the state of the glorified children of God.

The word *eternal* or *agelasting* does not, as we have

already seen, in itself imply endlessness, but only long duration reaching to the speaker's mental horizon. But the endless life and infinite resources of God forbid us to believe for a moment that He will ever permit His faithful servants to sink into unconsciousness. For, to the blessed, the loss of consciousness would be ruin: and ruin is the punishment of the disobedient. To those shut out from heaven, unconsciousness would be a mitigation of punishment. And some have ventured to hope, although without any warrant in Holy Scripture, that, in the mercy of God, such mitigation may be granted even to those who have rejected the salvation offered by Christ. But, whatever may become of the lost, no one can suggest a reason why God should ever deprive His own children of an infinite blessing. In other words, the nature of the case and the nature of God leave no room to doubt that the life of the glorified will be endless.

This sure inference is confirmed by Luke i. 33: "of His Kingdom there will be no end." For the continuance of this Kingdom implies continuance of its citizens. In John iii. 16 we read that God gave His Son "in order that every one who believes in Him may not perish but may have life eternal." This contrast implies that they who put faith in Christ will not perish; as they would do if their life were ever to cease. In John xiv. 19 our Lord says, "because I live, ye also shall live." As divine, His life is endless: such also must theirs be. In 1 Peter i. 4 the Apostle rejoices that his readers have been born again "to an inherit-

ance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading:" or, more correctly, incapable of corruption, of defilement, of decay. This implies the endlessness of their joy. These passages are independent of the word *agelasting*. But further proof is needless. The endless life of God and of Christ involves the endless blessedness of those whom He has ransomed that they may be the beloved Bride of His Son. They who pass through the gates of pearl will go out no more. Before their raptured gaze stretches a vista of endless blessing.

The only materials for further research touching this blessedness are to be found in the pleasures already enjoyed by the servants of God which are not conditioned by the present passing order of things.

Since, as we have seen, the new heaven and earth will be material, we may infer that, then as now, material beauty will be a means of enjoyment. In the present life, our eyes are frequently gladdened by visible beauty and our ears and hearts enraptured by music. May we not infer that these familiar delights are faint yet real anticipations of eternal beauty and of the songs of the redeemed? This is more than suggested by the beautiful picture of the New Jerusalem, and by the new song of the harpers which none can learn except the redeemed.

To those who know its secrets, a study of nature, of its marvellous and harmonious forces and developments, is an infinite delight; a delight increasing with prolonged study. If the present passing universe is so full of instruction, may we not infer that the new

heaven and earth will be still more so? In each case, the material universe is a revelation of the great Spirit who called it into being. And, just as now the devout student reads in nature the name of God, so shall we, throughout endless ages, with ever-increasing clearness, behold the face of God mirrored on the polished stones of the eternal city.

One of the richest joys on earth is loving intercourse with our fellows, and especially with the great and good. This joy of human fellowship must be an anticipation of blessed intercourse not shadowed by parting or discord or defect. And, just as prolonged intercourse unites kindred hearts in ties ever closer and sweeter, making our friends to be our most valued possessions and greatest joy, so may we confidently expect it to be in the great family which will gather in the eternal home of the children of God.

Lastly, above all other joys will be the supreme joy of direct vision of, and immediate personal intercourse with, Christ and God. So, in John xvii. 24, Christ prays, "I will that where I am also they may be with Me, in order that they may behold My glory." At death, as we read in 2 Cor. v. 8, the righteous go to their "home with the Lord." Similarly, Phil. i. 23. In 1 Thess. iv. 17, of the risen servants of Christ Paul says, "always with the Lord we shall be." This was, apparently, his chief thought about the blessedness of heaven. Hence his comparative indifference to other details. This beatific vision is implied in Rev. vii. 15: "they are before the throne of God, and shall serve

(or, worship) Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits upon the throne shall spread His tent over them. . . the Lamb shall shepherd them and guide them." So ch. xxi. 3: "the tent of God is with men, and He shall pitch His tent with them: and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them." Consequently, as we read in ch. xxii. 5, "they have no need of light of lamp and light of sun: because the Lord God will give them light." If intercourse with men on earth, imperfect and sinful like ourselves yet worthy of our respect, is so delightful and so elevating, if our present distant vision of Christ by the eye of faith fills us, even amid sorrow, with joy unspeakable and glorious, words and thoughts are lost in the prospect of that nearer vision.

This blessedness is frequently represented, in various figures, as a reward of right-doing and of sustained effort. Like a racer, Paul was pressing forward to the prize: Phil. iii. 14. At the close of his course he writes, in 2 Tim. iv. 8, "there is laid up for me the crown (or, wreath) of righteousness, which the Lord will give me in that day." So James i. 12: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; because, having become approved, he shall receive the crown of life which He has promised to them that love Him." Also 1 Peter v. 3, 4: "patterns of the flock. And, when the chief-shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall obtain the unfading crown of glory."

This reward, like the future punishment of sin, is frequently said to be in proportion to actions done in

the present life. So Matt. xvi. 27, "He will give back to each one according to his action:" and almost the same words in Rom. ii. 6. In Luke xix. 16-19, a man who by trading had made ten pounds was made ruler over ten cities; and a man who had made five pounds, over five cities. So 1 Cor. iii. 8: "each one will receive his own reward according to his own toil:" also Rev. xxii. 12, "I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give back to each one as his work is."

Doubtless, as of punishment so also of this proportionate reward, a chief element will be a revelation of the results of actions done on earth. This is suggested in 1 Cor. iii. 13: "each one's work will become manifest. For the day will declare it: because it will be revealed in fire: and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is." A joy unspeakable is laid up for thousands in the unveiling, in the light of eternity, of the unexpected yet glorious and abiding results of kind words and actions and of patient effort for the spread of the Kingdom of God. And, in its own nature, this reward must be in proportion to faithful effort.

We cannot doubt that this reward and these joys will increase without limit throughout an endless succession of ages. For they are derived from God, by man's knowledge of God. Now God is infinite: and man's knowledge of God must increase through continued intercourse with Him, and through the increasing likeness to Him which continued intercourse

cannot fail to produce. This ever-increasing knowledge of God must more and more fill His people with unspeakable joy in God. Now progress intellectual and moral is itself one of the greatest joys on earth. But, just as the student is gaining deeper insight into the matter of his research, his progress is arrested by the hand of death. And the beautiful moral character which has won the admiration and confidence of all is removed. In the city of God progress and the joy of progress will be as lasting as eternity and as unlimited as the fulness of God.

These faint outlines of endless blessing delineate reality. And, if so, all else is real only so far as it bears on this supreme reality. Just as the chief significance and value of the day-dawn is that it is a herald of the day, and of childhood that it may develop into manhood, so the real meaning of life on earth is that it is the beginning of eternal life. This gives to human life a worth which cannot be overrated. In early childhood, the heir to a throne is unconscious, among his toys and nurses, of the position awaiting him. But, as intelligence opens, his royal lineage and the dignity and responsibilities involved in it dawn upon him ; and he begins to look forward to the time when he will wield a sceptre. And only gradually do the children of God see through the disguise which veils the infinite grandeur of their royal lineage. But what they already see is sufficient to evoke a hope surpassing far all earthly hope, a hope which is a sure anticipation of eternal reality.

Our study of the Last Things must now close. We have looked as far forward as the materials at our disposal have enabled us. On the one side our vision is darkened by a gloom on which falls no ray of hope. On the other side opens to our view a glory on which falls no shadow, and which even from afar gives rest to the weary.

In that bright vision we see accomplished the creative purpose of God. Before time began the universe was only a thought, yet definite and wonderful, in the Eternal Mind. In the glorious city of God, that eternal thought will find its complete realisation.

Let us for a moment, from that point of view, review the course of realisation. Out of the unseen, and in the bosom of God, the visible universe sprang into being. Gradually it assumed definite form. Then life appeared; and developed through successive stages until at last reasoning man began to ask whence he came and whither he is going. During the successive ages of human history the evolution of society made progress. Amid a people awaiting His coming, the incarnate Son of God appeared. Under the new religious impulse thus given, a further development of the Kingdom of God among men took place. But now, as we stand on the mount of God, this earlier development is complete. The course of human history has run. Its solid platform has gone back into the chaos from which it sprang. But the actors remain: and in them the whole history of the past lives still in its abiding results. From the ruins of a departed

universe, a new heaven and earth have risen, never to pass away, and glorious beyond our thought. This visible beauty is an appropriate manifestation of the peace and joy of the myriads who pass through those gates of pearl and crowd the streets of gold. In them and in their intelligent service and love of God and joy in God, the eternal purpose of the Creator has found its perfect realisation. That purpose was, in the mode of its accomplishment, made contingent on man's free action. Its accomplishment has been modified, and seemed to be hindered, by man's sin. It has involved the suffering and death of the Creator Son. But to Him and to the redeemed, suffering and death are now only memories of the past. And the shadow they once cast over Him and them is now transformed into an abiding and more glorious revelation of God.

NOTES

NOTE A, on p. 89.—The most conspicuous recent defender of the Premillennial Advent of Christ is H. Grattan Guinness, from whom we have two volumes entitled *The Approaching End of the Age* and *Light for the Last Days*, which appeared in the years 1878 and 1886 respectively.

At the beginning of the latter work is a "chronological chart" marking the centuries from B.C. 2000 to A.D. 3000, and dividing this long period into the "Jewish Age," ending B.C. 740, followed by the "Gentile Age," which extends to A.D. 1930, and this followed by the "Millennial Age." Across the centuries are drawn several lines indicating various periods, historic or prophetic, including those given in Dan. viii. 14, xii. 11, 12.

A very curious element in both volumes is thus stated on p. 23 of *Light for the Last Days*: "Astronomy has taught that the great chronometer provided by God for man marks off by its different revolutions *years of three different lengths*: one measured by the sun, one by the moon, and one by the joint movement of both orbs; the

solar year, the *lunar* year, and the *calendar* year. They have found by research that God in His word employs in prophecy *all these three years* which He has caused the sun and moon to measure, and that the difference between them, small in a single year, becomes so considerable in longer periods as to have veiled from earlier generations the accurate fulfilment of chronological prophecies." This mode of reckoning enables our author to give to the same number of years three different lengths, according as it is measured by one or other of the above three scales; e.g. on p. 270 of *Light for the Last Days*, we find that a period of 1260 years, beginning from A.D. 663, may close at three different times, viz. A.D. 1885, or 1905, or 1923. A method so elastic gives scope for remarkable manipulations of dates.

But surely, in any kind of reckoning, whatever precise length be given to one year, the phrase "1260 years" means 1260 summers and winters, and cannot possibly mean either 1222 or 1242 summers and winters. In all nations and ages a definite number of years is one definite length of time, and is subject to no variation beyond fractions of one or at most two years. This strange suggestion, for which (see *Light for the Last Days* p. 24) the writer claims credit, and which is a corner stone of both volumes, does much to discredit both.

In each volume Mr. Guinness asserts strongly that the Millennium will be preceded by the visible and bodily coming of Christ for which His early followers were waiting. In support of this assertion, he gives

in *Light for the Last Days*, on pp. 460-480, five arguments. These we shall now consider.

"1. The doctrine that a still future millennium will precede the second advent of Christ was never broached in the Church for 1600 years." This sweeping statement ought to have been supported by quotations from early Christian writers. None are given. It is discredited by an admission (on p. 465) that "the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were anti-millenarian, but not post-millennialists." For this implies that they did not hold Mr. Guinness' view. And in these centuries lived nearly all the greatest writers of the early Church. This want of unanimity robs the testimony of early Christian writers of any decisive authority in the controversy before us.

The next argument is: "2. A millennium previous to the coming of Christ is nowhere mentioned in Scripture; nowhere either in the Old or New Testament, can these two events, the millennium and the second advent, be found in this order. They are very frequently mentioned together, but always in the reverse order, first the advent, then the millennium." But on p. 56 of *The Approaching End, etc.*, we read: "The broad fact that there is to be a reign of Christ and His saints on earth is not new. . . . But that it should be introduced by a binding of Satan, that it should last a thousand years, these facts, dimly intimated elsewhere, are revealed here *for the first and only time*." In other words, the "Millennium" is mentioned in the whole Bible only in Rev. xx. 1-7. And it is there

followed by a great revolt, by the appearance of Christ upon a throne, by the resurrection and judgment of the dead, and by dissolution of nature; features associated in many other passages of the New Testament with the Second Coming of Christ. The only quotations from the Bible in support of this second argument are Dan. vii. 14, 27, which refer evidently, not to a limited reign followed by rebellion, but to the eternal Kingdom of God. We are told that "The Church is to be a little flock, like sheep among wolves, to the end. . . . It was foretold that the greater part of the Church would become apostate, and continue so to the end of the age. . . . The entire interval is filled up with events which altogether preclude the possibility of a millennium." For these statements no proof is given. Although, in the Bible, we read little about the general progress of the Gospel, there is nothing to contradict such progress. On the other hand, in Matt. xiii. 33 it is compared to leaven "hidden in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened." This suggests unobtrusive, but all-pervading and complete victory.

Another argument is given on p. 474: "3. The predictions of antichrist prove the same order. It is evident that antichrist is to be destroyed by the coming of Christ, as is distinctly stated in 2 Thess. and elsewhere. Now St. Paul says in that same passage that the mystery of iniquity which would eventuate in the production of antichrist was already working in his own day, and would continue so to do until it culminated in his

revelation, and that he would be destroyed only at the epiphany ; hence the entire interval from apostolic times to the second advent of Christ is filled up by the growth, culmination, decay, and destruction of the great apostasy headed by antichrist." But that the mystery of iniquity was working in Paul's day and that at a future time the lawless one was to be "revealed," does not disprove the binding of Satan for a long period before this revelation of evil. Of such long period of rest, we have no indication in Paul's letters. But it is equally true that we have no indication whatever of a great apostasy after the coming of Christ described so frequently in the New Testament ; and the possibility of such apostasy is shut out by its plain and abundant teaching.

The only other arguments are : "4. It will be contrary to every analogy of the past, in the entire history of the human race, if this Christian age were to go from good to better until it blossomed into the millennium. All previous ages have gone from good to bad, and ended in abounding iniquity, which brought down judgment, and was followed by a fresh departure." Also, "5. The present state of things in the world confirms in the strongest way the conviction that the millennium will never be introduced by existing agencies prior to the coming of the Lord." It is true that in Rev. xx. 1 the Millennium is attributed to an extraordinary putting forth of divine power. But this may be without a visible and bodily coming of Christ. Indeed His first coming was not conspicuous. Himself said, "The Kingdom of God comes not with observation." In this

respect the preliminary stages differ from the one final manifestation. Mr. Guinness says, on p. 476: "nothing that exists or ever has existed since the fall has held fast its perfection or progressed from a lower to a higher platform, and if the present state of things were to improve into the millennium, it would form an abrupt and startling contrast to every analogy of the past." But indisputably such progress from a lower to a higher platform took place both at the Reformation and at the Methodist Revival. And the wide-spread and permanent blessings which followed reveal in each of these events the hand of God. So it may be again, and on a still larger scale. Moreover, even the Millennium will be followed by a terrible revolt. It will not "hold fast its perfection."

A radical and serious error in Mr. Guinness' books and theological standpoint is an underestimate of the infinite benefits already wrought by the Gospel, and of the infinite power of God operating therein.

To the very serious objection involved in the unlikeliness of the intermingling of mortal men with others raised from the dead to die no more, Mr. Guinness replies, on p. 515 of his later work, by referring to the angelic intercourse recorded in the Bible. But these angel visits were few and far between, made only to a few devout persons; and therefore did not interfere with the ordinary course of human life. But the intercourse involved in the premillennial theory would change completely the whole aspect of human life and probation.

To the other serious objections set forth in Lect. VIII., Mr. Guinness gives no reply.

In the *Approaching End of the Age* pp. 53, 59, in order to prove that Rev. xix. 11 describes the foretold Second Coming of Christ, Mr. Guinness asserts that the vision of the white horse and its rider describes an event subsequent to the marriage feast in *vv.* 7, 9. But, as I have proved in Lect. VII., the visions in the Book of Revelation are not always consecutive. In this case, the incident mentioned in *v.* 10 separates the verses which follow from those which precede it. And it is impossible to conceive that the Hallelujahs of *vv.* 1-7, which far surpass anything in ch. xx. 4-6, will be followed by the great conflict described in ch. xix. 11-21. The Bridegroom will never leave the marriage feast to go forth again to fight.

Instead of interpreting what he admits to be the only passage in the Bible which mentions the Millennium in the light of the abundant and harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament, Mr. Guinness distorts the rest of the New Testament in order to bring it into harmony with this one passage. So *Approaching End* p. 73: "Without further revelation we should doubtless have understood them (i.e. many passages which seem to teach that good and bad men will be judged at the same time) to teach a simultaneous judgment; *with* further revelation, we can read them as broad comprehensive statements, made by One who *knew*, but did not at the time wish to *reveal*, modifying details." He attempts to justify this method of exegesis

by saying that the Apocalypse is a later revelation of the will of God ; and compares the case of an admiral who receives first a general, and afterwards a more specific, command. But we have no proof that the Book of Revelation is the latest document of the New Testament. Modern scholarship teaches that probably it preceded the Fourth Gospel by some twenty-five years.[1] Indisputably this last and the First Epistle of John contain the maturest thought of the New Testament.

Moreover, no admiral would set aside abundant personal directions in deference to a later written command unless the meaning of this last was open to no doubt. We have seen in Lect. VII. that the one passage on which Mr. Guinness relies does not require the meaning he gives to it. It is therefore utterly unsafe as a foundation for a doctrine not found, as he admits, elsewhere in the Bible.

How seriously, in deference to his interpretation of this one passage, Mr. Guinness distorts the plain teaching of the New Testament, we see on pp. 61-79 of his earlier volume. He supposes that the dead whom the sea and Death and Hades will give up, as described in Rev. xx. 13, will not include the martyrs and others described in *v.* 4. He speaks of them (see p. 70) as "criminals coming to receive their doom. . . . Their destiny is the lake of fire." He denies that one of the redeemed will stand before that

[1] See the very good "Introduction" in the volume on the Book of Revelation in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools.*

throne of judgment; and divides the dead into two classes, those who rise before the Millennium to life eternal, and those who will rise after it and perish. This is in flat contradiction to Rev. xx. 12, 15, where we read that the book of life will then be opened, and that "if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." For these last words imply clearly a discrimination in this last judgment. Moreover, if only those raised before the Millennium be saved, what will become of those born during the thousand years of blessing? The theory sinks under the weight of its own absurdity.

How irreconcilable is Mr. Guinness' theory with the recorded teaching of Christ, we see in his treatment (on p. 74) of the solemn vision of judgment in Matt. xxv. 31-46. This he persists in calling a "parable." But it differs from the parables of Christ in that it is self-interpreting. In spite of many conspicuous features in common, he endeavours to show "that the scene here described is not identical with that in Rev. xx." His only reasons are that the one is "an award only," the other "an investigation;" the one speaks of "all the nations," the other of "the dead small and great;" in the one "the wicked are condemned *en masse*, on the negative ground of what they have *not* done," in the other, "as individuals, on the positive ground of what they *have* done, 'the things written in the books.'" He adds, "If this parable does describe a judgment of the dead, (which is most unlikely,) then we are compelled by the later revelation, to apply to

it the same rule as to the first class of passages, and to conceive that our Lord presented the judgment as a great whole, and was purposely silent, as to the interval between its two stages."

Similar violence is inflicted on Matt. xiii. 39-43, 49, and on the great passage in John v. 29. In Lect. VII. I have already shown that the interpretation advocated by me involves no such violence even to the one passage in deference to which Mr. Guinness distorts so many others.

The strongest point in Mr. Guinness' argument is his reference to the total silence of the rest of the New Testament, even when foretelling the coming of Christ, about the long period of blessing foretold or implied in Rev. xx. 1-6. He argues not unfairly that so long a period of blessing, postponing the return of Christ, could not have been passed over in silence by Christ and His Apostles. The seriousness of this difficulty, I do not deny. But a difficulty quite as serious besets the only alternative, viz. to break up into two parts separated by a long interval the last judgment so frequently described in the New Testament. The absence of reference to the Millennium in passages which speak of the Second Coming of Christ is not more remarkable than its total absence from Rev. vi., where a series of visions trace the course of events up to the final judgment of the wicked and the endless rest of the redeemed Take it as we will, Rev. xx. 1-6 presents an insoluble difficulty. But this difficulty is not lessened by Mr. Guinness' suggestion, which, as

we have seen, throws into confusion the harmonious teaching of the rest of the Bible.

Our author endeavours to prove that the coming of Christ is near. See *Light for the Last Days* pp. 366-392. "We have six separate and distinct *sets* of *signs*, each sufficient by and of itself alone to indicate that we are on the verge of the establishment on earth of the eternal Kingdom of the Son of Man—that blessed reign of righteousness and peace, of which the millennial sabbath is only the portal and introduction. We have: I. Political signs. II. Ecclesiastical signs. III. Jewish signs. IV. Mohammedan signs. V. General social signs. VI. Chronological signs." But these curiosities of argument do not merit serious discussion here.

Mr. Guinness does not suggest why, unlike all other prophetic numbers, the "thousand years" denote exactly a thousand historical years.

NOTE B, on p. 89.—In a work entitled *Parousia*, J. Stuart Russell endeavours to prove that all the prophecies in the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of all men, and the dissolution of nature, were fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. On p. 82, in a note on Matt. xxiv. 29-31, he says, "We may go further than this, and affirm that it is not only appropriate as applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, but that this is its true and exclusive application. We find no vestige of an intimation that our Lord had any ulterior and occult

signification in view." His argument is that Christ foretold that He would come during the lifetime of some of His hearers; that no other event in that generation, except the fall of Jerusalem, can be identified with His coming; and that therefore unless He referred to this event His solemn words have fallen to the ground. So on p. 548, in a summary of the work: "As the result of the investigation we are landed in this dilemma: either the whole group of predictions, comprehending the destruction of Jerusalem, the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, and the rewarding of the faithful, did take place before the passing away of that generation, as predicted by Christ, taught by the apostles, and expected by the whole Church; or, else, the hope of the Church was a delusion, the teaching of the apostles an error, the predictions of Jesus a dream." This argument, he repeats again and again throughout the whole work.

The destruction of Jerusalem was undoubtedly "a day of Jehovah" in the sense in which, as we saw in Lect. III., that phrase is used in Joel ii. 1 and elsewhere frequently in the Old Testament. For this great catastrophe was a conspicuous punishment, after much longsuffering, of the nation which had consummated previous disobedience by the murder of Christ. But nowhere else is the abundant and definite teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ placed in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem except in Matt. xxiv. and its parallels in Mark and Luke. And even here the two events

are easily distinguished. In Matt. xxiv. 3 the disciples ask Christ about the time of the destruction of the temple and about the sign of His coming and of the completion of the age. But this question does not imply that the fall of Jerusalem was identical with the coming of Christ. The two events are clearly distinguished in *v.* 29, where Christ says that "immediately after the affliction of those days" shall be the darkening of the sun and moon, His own appearance coming on the clouds, and the gathering together by the angels of His chosen ones from one end of heaven to the other. For this immediate sequence by no means implies identity. And nothing happened at the capture of Jerusalem which can, by the wildest stretch of imagination, be described by language used in *vv.* 29-31.

The only passage in which there seems to be any actual blending of the fall of Jerusalem with the coming of Christ is Matt. xxiv. 27, where Christ supports an exhortation about the earlier event by a reference to the latter. But this reference is found only in the First Gospel, where the early return of Christ is much more conspicuous than elsewhere in the New Testament.

The vision of judgment in Matt. xxv. 31-46 contains no reference whatever to the destruction of Jerusalem, and has nothing in common with it. But it is forced into the iron shoe which Mr. Russell has invented. He understands (on p. 105) "all the nations" to mean "all the nations of Palestine, or all the tribes of the land." And, stranger still, he gives the same meaning to the same phrase in Matt. xxviii. 19, "make disciples

of all the nations." He supposes (see p. 112) that the terrible words "depart ye cursed into everlasting fire" were heard only in the unseen world unheeded by the nations of the earth and unrecorded by human historians. And, while we wonder at this strange exegesis, our author falls upon us, as with a sledge-hammer, and says, on p. 113: "We are placed, therefore, in this dilemma—either the words of Jesus have failed, and the hopes of His disciples have been falsified; or else these words and hopes have been fulfilled, and the prophecy in all its parts has been fully accomplished. One thing is certain, the veracity of our Lord is committed to the assertion that the whole and every part of the events contained in this prophecy were to take place before the close of the existing generation."

In reference to John v. 28, 29, vi. 39, 40, 44, xi. 24, xii. 48, Mr. Russell says, on p. 126: "Since our Lord Himself distinctly and frequently places that event within the limits of the existing generation, we conclude that the Parousia, the resurrection, the judgment, and the last day, all belong to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem."

The same treatment is extended to 1 Thess. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15-18, v. 2-11, 2 Thess. i. 6-10, ii. 1, 8. He supposes that Paul comforts the mourners at Thessalonica by reminding them that a catastrophe is at hand which will submerge the Jewish state, and that then, in some invisible manner, the dead in Christ will rise and His living servants be caught up to meet Him in the air. Since this resurrection is in 1 Thess. iv. 14 compared to

that of Christ, we ask whether after the fall of Jerusalem the graves of the dead Christians were found empty as was His grave on the third day; and how it was that the rapture to heaven of all the followers of Christ in Macedonia, Greece, Rome, and elsewhere, including the Apostle John, made no break in the continuous history of the Church on earth.

The same method is applied to 1 Cor. xv. The description of the bodies of the risen ones given in *vv.* 35-49 is scarcely referred to. But Mr. Russell supposes (*v.* 51) that the "last trumpet" sounded 1800 years ago. Unfortunately, so far as we know, no one heard it. All hesitation is banished (on p. 211) by the familiar argument: "Right or wrong, the apostle is committed to this representation of the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the transmutation of the living saints, within the natural lifetime of the Corinthians and himself. We are placed therefore in this dilemma —1. Either the apostle was guided by the Spirit of God, and the events which he predicted came to pass; or 2. The apostle was mistaken in this belief, and these things never took place."

The teaching in Rev. xx. 1-10 about the Millennium is a serious difficulty to our author. For he is compelled to say on p. 523: "The result of the whole is, that we must consider the passage which treats of the thousand years, from *v.* 5 to *v.* 10, as an intercalation or parenthesis. The Seer, having begun to relate the judgment of the dragon, passes in *v.* 7 out of the apocalyptic limits to conclude what he had to say

respecting the final punishment of 'the old serpent,' and the fate that awaited him at the close of a lengthened period called 'a thousand years.' This we believe to be the sole instance in the whole book of an excursion into distant futurity; and we are disposed to regard the whole parenthesis as relating to matters still future and unfulfilled." This confirms my statement on p. 69 that Rev. xx. 1-6 contains teaching not found elsewhere in the Bible.

After dropping out of the consecutive order *vv.* 5-10, Mr. Russell joins on, at the close of *v.* 4, the tremendous vision of judgment in *vv.* 11-15. But, strange to say, he supposes that this judgment has already taken place, i.e. that earth and heaven have already fled from the face of Him who sits on the throne. On p. 525 he writes: "If the judgment scene described in this passage be identical with that in Matt. xxv., it follows that it is not 'the end of the world' in the sense of its being the dissolution of the material fabric of the globe and the close of human history, but that which is so frequently predicted as accompanying the *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*,—the end of the age, or termination of the Jewish dispensation."

In other words, our author asks us to believe that the great event for which the early Christians were waiting, and for which we still wait as the goal of our highest hopes, took place in A.D. 70 in some sort of invisible connection with the fall of the Jewish state. He does this because only thus can he interpret a few passages in the Synoptist Gospels, and especially

in the First Gospel, which seem to assert or imply that Christ would return to judge the world during the lifetime of some of His hearers. Like Mr. Guinness, but with much greater violence, he sacrifices the abundant and plain teaching of the New Testament to a small portion of it.

NOTE C, on p. 89.—The same exposition is given by Prof. E. P. Gould, D.D., in the *International Critical Commentary* on St. Mark, pp. 241-253. But since Matt. xxv. 31-46, John v. 28, 29, 1 Thess. iv. 15-18, 2 Thess. i. 6-10, Rev. xx. 11-15 have no parallels in the Second Gospel, he is not compelled to face the difficulties involved in the position he has taken up. Relying on parallels in the Old Testament, and especially on Dan. vii. 13, he supposes that the words in Mark xiii. 26, "then shall they see the Son of Man coming in clouds," were fulfilled at the taking of Jerusalem. Much safer would it be to interpret Dan. vii. 13, "there came with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man," as an Old Testament anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ which occupies so large a place in the prophecy of the New Testament; and to expound such passages as Isa. xiii. 10, xxxiv. 4, Joel ii. 30 as distinct and dim anticipations of a catastrophe which some day will overwhelm the whole material universe.

The exposition of any one passage in the New Testament needs the light afforded by all others on

the same subject. But, in dealing with a very difficult eschatological passage, Prof. Gould has scarcely referred to the eschatology of the rest of the New Testament.

NOTE D, on p. 89.—The same teaching, with exceptions in details, is given by the Rev. Alex. Brown in a book entitled *The Great Day of the Lord.* Nearly two-thirds of this volume are given to the Book of Revelation, leaving only one-third for the important eschatology of the Synoptist Gospels and of Paul.

The writer emphasises the statement in Rev. i. 1, xxii. 6, 7, 12, 20 that the prophecy speaks of "things which must need take place shortly;" but asserts that we are now living in the Millennium, thus giving to the visions of the book an extension to our own time. He accepts Mr. Russell's suggestion that the Millennium is an intercalation, and that Rev. xx. 11 must be joined on to *v.* 4. So on p. 223: "John's glance forward a 1000 years is no part of his original purpose, but only an interjected note of needful warning which breaks the continuity of his leading course of thought. Again we say, what John does not see, but is only told and tells again to us, lies out of the direct line of his teaching, and is to be understood as parenthetical. We must, therefore, as the method of the book demands take the vision of *v.* 11, and link it on to the vision of *v.* 4, because the right concatenation of John's thought lies along the line of what is made *visible* to

the seer, and not along the explanatory by-paths into which he may digress."

The prediction of judgment in John v. 28, 29, and the prophetic vision in Rev. xx. 11-15, Mr. Brown supposes to have been fulfilled in the unseen world at the fall of Jerusalem. Touching the solemn words "from whose face fled the earth and the heaven, and place was not found for them," he says, on p. 227, "one can only smile when expositors gravely find here a *destruction* of heaven and earth. John merely tells us, in a touch of unparalleled sublimity, that from his sight the old familiar earth has disappeared; and even the accustomed heaven is gone." In a reference to Matt. xxv. 31-46 he says, on p. 319, "In view of the demands of faithful exegesis, this judgment scene must take its beginning in the period immediately succeeding the downfall of Jerusalem."

Mr. Brown finds insuperable difficulty in Mr. Russell's suggestion that the announcement, in 1 Thess. iv. 17, that at the coming of Christ His surviving servants will be caught up to meet Him in the air has already been fulfilled in the unseen world. He asks, on p. 349f, "Is it possible that at a time when the Church is confessedly weak the Lord is going to deplete it of its richest blood and either destroy it or leave it helpless? . . . In short, this idea of 'rapture,' though fondly held by multitudes, involves Paul's teaching on 'last things' in the most flagrant inconsistencies, and makes a science of eschatology on any understanding quite impossible. . . . Surely the second-rate

Christians who were left after the 'rapture' to rule the Church were competent enough to chronicle so startling an event as the sudden disappearance of the more illustrious leaders." It would have been more to the point to say that Paul's words in 1 Cor. xv. 51f imply that all the servants of Christ who survive His coming will be at once caught up, leaving only the godless behind.

This difficulty, Mr. Brown endeavours to evade by finding fault with the rendering given both in AV. and RV. to the Greek adverb *ἅμα*, which they translate "*together* with them." He says, on p. 351, "This rendering inevitably suggests identity as to time. But while the word may have this temporal reference, it never carries it in the writings of St. Paul, but some other identity, of place, quality, or manner." It never denotes identity of manner; but always close companionship, this involving, if the idea of time be present, coincidence in time. The words here used, *ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς*, can only mean that two sets of people, the risen ones and the survivors, shall be together caught up to meet Christ.

Mr. Brown also endeavours to weaken the definiteness of the teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ by giving to the word *παρουσία* the meaning *presence*. But, as I have shown on p. 25, this looser meaning cannot be allowed.

Without the slightest reason Mr. Brown translates, on p. 370, Paul's words recorded in Acts xxiv. 15, "having hope in God that there IS SOON TO BE

a resurrection both of the just and the unjust;" and, resting upon these words and "the coming judgment" in *v.* 25, he says, "it is evident that he (Paul) was still strong in the expectation of a *parousia* close at hand." But of the nearness of the resurrection and judgment, Paul's words in these two passages convey no hint. They simply note futurity.

The theory now before us is an attempt to remove a real difficulty in the New Testament, viz. the expectation expressed in a few passages that the return of Christ for which His early followers were waiting would take place during the lifetime of some of His contemporaries. But the explanation suggested is impossible. For it involves a violence to the plain grammatical meaning of a great part of the New Testament which would destroy the meaning of language and throw open to doubt the most definite assertions. Relief from an acknowledged difficulty cannot be purchased at this price.

NOTE E, on p. 89.—Very different from the above is a scholarly volume by Dr. Milligan on *The Revelation of St. John*, in which, after calling attention to the difficulties which make impossible the theory of a premillennial advent, he suggests that "the thousand years," and the "little time" which follows them, do not denote duration in time but only the idea of completeness. He interprets these periods as simultaneous,

and as each co-extensive with the whole Christian dispensation, during which he supposes that, in reference to the saints, Satan will be completely bound, but in reference to others in some measure free. So on p. 210: "The fundamental principle to be kept clearly and resolutely in view is this, that the thousand years express no period of time. Like so many other expressions of the Apocalypse, their real is different from their apparent meaning. They are not to be taken literally. They embody an idea; and that idea, whether applied to the subjugation of Satan or to the triumph of the saints, is the idea of *completeness.* Satan is bound for a thousand years—*i.e.* he is completely bound. The saints reign for a thousand years—*i.e.* they are introduced into a state of perfect and glorious victory."

On p. 213, when expounding Rev. xx. 3, "after these things (Satan) must needs be loosed a little time," Dr. Milligan calls attention to ch. vi. 11, "they should rest yet for a *little time,* until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled." This "little time" he correctly understands to be "the whole Christian age;" and then goes on to give to the same phrase the same extension of time in ch. xx. 3. He says, "when it is said Satan shall be loosed 'for a little time,' the meaning is that he shall be loosed for *the whole Christian age.*" In other words, two periods of time, one called "a thousand years" and the other "a little time," which are expressly said to be consecutive, and

are contrasted, Dr. Milligan takes as simultaneous, each embracing the whole Christian age; and, with strange inconsistency, as denoting not periods of time but only the idea of completeness.

It is quite true that symbols must not be interpreted literally. But, unless there be definite relation between the objects symbolised and the symbols, these last are useless. Unless the phrases before us denote periods of time, they are meaningless. The only examples in support of his strange and unlikely method of interpretation which Dr. Milligan brings are Ezek. xxxix. 9, where we read that, after the destruction of Magog, the inhabitants of the cities of Israel will for seven years burn the weapons of the conquered and will need no other fuel; and *v.* 12, where we are told that the house of Israel will be for seven months burying the slain of Gog and purifying the land from the presence of their corpses. These examples are no proof whatever that in symbolic language longer or shorter periods of time may denote merely greater or less completeness. For in this case the greatness of the overthrow is proved by the length of time during which the captured weapons lasted for fuel and the length of time required to bury the dead. On these easily explained examples, in one chapter of the Old Testament, Dr. Milligan builds up a most incongruous method of exposition.

Moreover, to say that Satan is bound, "in order that he may not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years are completed," as we read in Rev. xx. 3, and

then to say, as we read in *v.* 8, that at the same time he will "go forth to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth" is flat contradiction.

The great difficulties involved in the interpretation of the Millennium given in this book of mine, I admit; and shall welcome a better solution. But I prefer to leave unexplained these ten verses of the most difficult book of the Bible rather than admit principles of interpretation which would leave open to doubt the plainest assertions of Holy Scripture.

NOTE F, on p. 197.—Since the publication of this work, my attention has been called to several chapters on the Future Life in Mr. Gladstone's recently published *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler.* With great pleasure I notice that the illustrious writer is in complete agreement, on all main points, with the opinions expressed by me eight years ago in *The Expositor* and now embodied in this volume.

Mr. Gladstone calls attention to the two meanings mentioned on p. 199 of this volume, of the phrase "immortality of the soul;" and points out, on p. 142, that Butler's argument in the first chapter of his *Analogy* "is a plea not for immortality, properly so called, but for persistence of life as against the special occasion of death." Lower down we read, "There are those who say these two things, survival and immortality, are but one: and who seem to suppose that the case of surmounting death is like that of obtaining a passport which

will carry us over the frontier of some foreign country; where, this once done, we have no other impediment to apprehend. But, on such an assumption of the identity of survival with immortality, it is to be observed that it is a pure assumption, and nothing more. We have no title to postulate *in limine* that powers, which may be so adjusted or equipped as to face the contingency of death, must therefore be in all respects such as to be certain of facing with a like impunity every other contingency which, for aught we know, the dimness of the future may enfold in its ample bosom. Such questions may remain open, and without prejudice for independent discussion."

Mr. Gladstone denies strongly, and again and again, in this denial agreeing with my statement in *The Expositor*, vol. ii., fourth series, p. 423, and on p. 197 of this volume, that the Bible ever teaches, in the proper sense of the phrase, the immortality of the soul. On p. 198 of his work on Butler, we read: "Another consideration of the highest importance is that the natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of an ingeniously sustained, but gravely and formidably contested, philosophical opinion. And surely there is nothing, as to which we ought to be more on our guard, than the entrance into the precinct of Christian doctrine, either without authority or by an abuse of authority, of philosophical speculations disguised as truths of Divine Revelation. They bring with them a grave restraint on mental liberty; but what is worse is,

that their basis is a pretension essentially false, and productive by retribution of other falsehoods.

"Under these two heads, we may perhaps find that we have ample warrant for declining to accept the tenet of natural immortality as a truth of Divine Revelation."

This and similar testimonies are of utmost value. For so well-read and careful a scholar as the writer undoubtedly is would not commit himself to a statement which might be overturned by a single quotation from the Bible.

Also very interesting is Mr. Gladstone's account of the "History of Opinion," on the subject before us. He denies that the immortality of the soul was taught in the earliest age of the Church. On p. 184 we read, "The secret of this mental freedom, the condition which made it possible, was the absence from the scene of any doctrine of a natural immortality inherent in the soul. Absent it may be termed, for all practical purposes, until the third century; for, though it was taught by Tertullian in connexion with the Platonic ideas, it was not given forth as belonging to the doctrine of Christ or His Apostles. . . . It seems to me as if it were from the time of Origen that we are to regard the idea of natural, as opposed to that of Christian, immortality as beginning to gain a firm foothold in the Christian Church.

"And now, indeed, in connexion with that great name, it may be thought that we are no longer entitled to speak of moderation and reserve as characteristic of the prevailing tone of Christian thought. The opinion, for which he is now most generally known to have been finally condemned, is that which is called Restorationism

or Universalism; an opinion which harmonizes with, and perhaps presupposes, the natural immortality of the soul. But the idea of restoration was only one amidst a crowd of his notions, all of which had the natural immortality of the soul for their common ground."

On p. 189 we read: "It seems indisputable that the materials for the opinion that the soul is by nature immortal, whether we call it dogma or hypothesis, were for a long period in course of steady accumulation; though this was not so from the first. After some generations, however, the mental temper and disposition of Christians inclined more and more to its reception. Without these assumptions it would be impossible to account for the wholesale change which has taken place in the mind of Christendom with regard to the subject of natural immortality. It would be difficult, I think, to name any other subject connected with religious belief (though not properly belonging to it) on which we can point to so sweeping and absolute a revolution of opinion: from the period before Origen, when the idea of an immortality properly natural was unknown or nearly hidden, to the centuries of the later Middle Ages and of modern time, when, at least in the West, it had become practically undisputed and universal."

The great influence of Augustine, mentioned by me on p. 199, is also admitted. On p. 192 our author says, "It seems, however, to be generally felt that the determining epoch in the history of seminal Christian thought upon this subject was the life of St. Augustine, together with that period, following closely upon it, when the Western Church became rapidly imbued with his theology in almost its entire compass."

Attention is called to the fact that the future punishment of sin was never discussed in the four great councils of the early Church, and that no reference is made to it in the great historic formula now known as the Nicene Creed. Evidently it was not considered an essential part of the doctrine of Christ. On p. 195 we read, "The doctrine of natural, as distinguished from Christian, immortality had not been subjected to the severer tests of wide publicity and resolute controversy, but had crept into the Church, by a back door as it were; by a silent though effective process; and was in course of obtaining a title by tacit prescription."

On p. 199 Mr. Gladstone expresses his regret that the solemn subject of the future punishment of sin, so prominent in the New Testament, is losing its place in the modern pulpit; and attributes this to the over-statements so common in popular teaching on the subject, and to a natural revolt from them. With all this, I heartily agree. Many have refrained from preaching on the subject because they cannot accept and teach the popular theology, and they know not what to put in its place. To supply this need, is a chief part of the purpose of this volume of mine.

Throughout the work its venerable author strongly opposes Universalism. He shows with great force that it flatly contradicts the plain teaching of Holy Scripture; and that it is out of harmony with what we know of the Divine government. On p. 223 we read, "It is remarkable that this scheme does not present the prospect of a plan for a reformation of character, with the cessation of penalty as its natural consequence; but it is rather a repeal or exhaustion

of penalty, with reformation of character set in the shade, and playing a secondary part: at the very best a reformation brought about arbitrarily, and in defiance of all known laws. And those stern denunciations of Holy Scripture, which on a long course of trial have been found none too strong for their purpose, it is deliberately sought to relax by promising to every sinner of whatever inveteracy, audacity, and hardness an endless period of immunity of suffering; after a period spent in it, which they have no means of defining, and which every offender is therefore left to retrench at his own pleasure, on his own behalf."

On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone refuses to admit, as taught in the Bible, the endless suffering of the lost. On p. 215 we read, "When the souls of the wicked are declared to have destruction or death for their doom, the meaning, as is alleged, is firstly that they will survive, secondly that they will survive for ever, and, thirdly, that they will survive under a double condition: the one, that of continual persistence in wickedness, and, the other that of a co-extensive, and also never ending, immersion in suffering. There appears to be presented here a good deal of difficulty; so much of difficulty, at least, as may serve to recommend a certain amount of reserve. I do not here venture on any assertion." Again, on p. 259: "How much do we know of the lot of the perversely wicked? They disappear into pain and sorrow; the veil drops upon them in that condition. Every indication of a further change is withheld; so that, if it be designed, it has not been made known, and is nowhere incorporated with the Divine teaching. Whatever else pertains to

this sad subject is withheld from our too curious and unprofitable gaze."

Our author refers on p. 218 to the theory of Conditional Immortality as a speculation, with something in its favour but not taught in the Bible and open to objection. An interesting speculation of his own is given on p. 226: "Considering that sin is excess, and that the effect of excess is commonly to depress, weaken, and exhaust, it may seem at least as legitimate to contemplate the possibility that there may be in the class of future existences now under view a change, but in the opposite direction: a change which shall enfeeble faculty, affection, even appetite, and more or less drop them out from the human equipment. If it be so, these losses might, under the laws of our nature, include not an increased but a reduced susceptibility; a reduction of pain, analogous to that which may be brought about by the amputation of some acutely suffering member. It might be that, in the general depression and degradation of human nature brought about by proved incapacity to take profit, here or hereafter, by remedial laws, we might narrow, if not efface, the interval which severs us from animals, in these great particulars of realising recollection and corresponding anticipation, and might, without having identity, or personality, in any respect impaired, attain an indefinitely large relief from active penalty, at the cost of a descent in the rank of being, which perhaps also may be indefinitely large." The writer adds that the above is mere speculation, given only

to show that speculation may take various directions; and urges as a safer course to accept the declarations of Holy Scripture and leave all else in the hands of the Divine and unerring Judge.

Mr. Gladstone disowns, as not justified by anything in the Bible, the common notion that a vast majority of mankind will be lost. The chapters dealing with the subject before us conclude with a "Summary of Theses on a Future Life," in which are recapitulated the results attained.

The whole volume fills me with wonder that a man whose days have been spent in the activities and conflicts of political life has been able so carefully to ponder the great realities which will abide when all earthly kingdoms have passed away; and, in extreme old age, on the borderland of the unseen, to give us so valuable an addition to our theological literature.

NOTE G, on p. 211.—A volume of sermons on *Everlasting Punishment* published in A.D. 1880 by Dean Goulburn, who after an honoured life has been called away while (May, 1897) I write these pages, may be taken as an example of the popular treatment of the subject. The writer makes scarcely any attempt to prove that the doctrine of the endless suffering of the lost is taught in the Bible; but assumes that those who object to it do so merely because it seems to them "inconsistent with God's justice," or with His "love," or with His "purpose in creation," and contents himself

with answering these objections and endeavouring to overturn the alternative theories of annihilation and universal restoration. But he ignores another alternative, viz. that the Bible does not define precisely and indisputably the doom of the lost. And his attempt to deal with the supreme objection involved in the infinite love of God seems to me little better than a series of platitudes. Along with these we have serious misstatements; e.g. on p. 73, "you have precisely the same Scriptural ground for asserting that the life is not eternal as for asserting that the punishment is not eternal." This remark ignores many definite statements in the New Testament about the blessedness of the saved, quoted on pp. 150, 236, which have no parallels in the passages which describe the ruin of the lost. It ignores also the different relation of blessing and cursing to the nature of God. The one is a direct, the other an indirect, outflow of His love.

NOTE H, on p. 211.—In a volume entitled *An Examination of the Doctrines of Conditional Immortality and Universalism* published in A.D. 1878, the Rev. J. R. Gregory writes, on p. 22: "We hold that the doctrine of man's indefeasible immortality or endless conscious existence is as clearly revealed in Holy Writ as, for instance, the doctrine of the Trinity. As has been often observed, the Bible contains few, if any, distinct statements of the being of God; not any argument to demonstrate it. It *assumes* His existence and tells us

about Him. So also the fact that man shall endure for ever is *taken for granted* from Genesis to the Apocalypse." But the first five verses of Genesis contain six plain statements which could not possibly have been written except by one who believed the existence of God; e.g. "God created the heavens and the earth." For, apart from the existence of God, these words convey no meaning whatever. But from beginning to end of the Bible there is no statement which involves clearly "man's indefeasible immortality." This would at once have become apparent to the writer if he had attempted to give even one example of the class of passages to which he refers. But he gives no example. Reckless misstatements like this have done much to bring theology into contempt.

Mr. Gregory's only real argument is that "the Jews of Christ's day believed" the doctrine in question; and that Christ and His Apostles are not said to have contradicted it. Fortunately our author replies to his own argument. On p. 122 he write, "All parties in this argument claim the support of the Jewish teaching as to the destiny of the wicked. And apparently with reason: for evidence has been adduced to prove that the Jews hold or held eternal punishment, universal restoration, the annihilation or extermination of the hopelessly incurable. This fact alone might lead us to appraise the exegetical value of Jewish Eschatology at a lower figure than it generally bears in discussions about the future state of the impenitent."

On p. 23 Mr. Gregory gives "a summary of what

every one acknowledges that the Bible states," in five points every one of which I accept. But he does nothing to show that these five points, taken together, involve the doctrine he advocates.

On the other hand, our author replies with much skill to Mr. White. For instance, on p. 76, he shows that the addition of the adjective *everlasting* to the substantive *destruction* proves that this last word does not, as Mr. White contends, denote extinction. "Could the force of superfluity go further? What else can extinction be but everlasting? If I cease to be, I *cease* to be, and *I* never can begin to be again: because a creature that began to be at any date could not be one and the same with that which had existed years or moments before." To this argument, I see no answer.

The book is a clever attack on an untenable position. But the position which the writer takes up is as untenable as that which he attacks; and is open to still more serious objections. With these objections he does not attempt to deal. And for some of his own most important assertions, he gives no valid proof.

NOTE I, on p. 211.—A very careful study of the subject before us is found in a work entitled the *Hereafter*, by James Fyfe, who unfortunately was taken from us soon after it appeared in A.D. 1890. This volume is a most useful collection of facts bearing on the case. Elaborate lists are given of all passages in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in

which occur the words describing the doom of the lost: and with great care the writer investigates their meaning. With few exceptions, his results agree with those set forth in this volume. But our author's grasp of the subject as a whole is much less satisfactory than is his treatment of verbal details. He does not escape from serious ambiguity in his use of the word *immortality*, giving to it sometimes its Biblical meaning and sometimes its meaning in the writings of Cicero. The few pages devoted to objections against the theory of endless suffering, which theory the writer himself accepts, are scanty and weak. But the book as a whole is a useful guide to the facts of the case.

NOTE J, on p. 211.—In a scholarly and useful volume, Dr. S. D. F. Salmond of Aberdeen discusses *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*. This phrase he takes, as he tells us in the preface, "in the large sense which Paul gives it;" and adds, in close agreement with Lect. XVI. of this volume, "Life, eternal life, the immortality of the man, not the immortality of the soul, is the message of the Bible, alike in Old Testament and in New, in Christ and in apostle, in John and in Paul."

Dr. Salmond reproduces and discusses with learning and ability the beliefs of savage tribes and of the ancient world about life beyond the grave; and contrasts with these, and expounds, the teaching of the Old Testament. This is followed by the teaching of

Christ, the general apostolic doctrine, and the Pauline doctrine. Under these heads our author discusses the teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection and judgment of the dead, and their final destiny.

This exposition of the teaching of the Bible, though good so far as it goes, does not cover the whole ground. Its most serious defect is the absence, except one slight reference on p. 387, of any exposition of the important passages which compare the doom of the lost to destruction of vegetable matter by fire, e.g. Matt. iii. 12, xiii. 40, John xv. 6, Heb. vi. 8. And we have no adequate treatment of the passages, e.g. Phil. iii. 19, which speak of destruction as the end of the ungodly.

In the last division of the work, we have an able chapter on "The Contribution of Christianity to the Hope of Immortality." This is followed by chapters on "Annihilation and Conditional Immortality" and "Restorationism and Allied Doctrines." These chapters are unsatisfactory. The objections to the doctrine of annihilation are only general observations about the nature of man and the work of Christ and similar topics, with a reference to Matt. xxv. 46, Mark iii. 29, John iii. 36, Acts i. 25, of which the last two passages are altogether irrelevant. On p. 661 our author says, "The doctrine of Restorationism fails, though not with the same measure of failure, as the dogma of Conditional Immortality." Why Dr. Salmond calls one a doctrine and the other a dogma, he does not tell us. This last term is a very good one if properly used.

But I think it should be reserved for formulated statements of doctrine claiming to be received not so much for argument adduced as for the authority which asserts it. If so, none of the theories before us can be called dogmas. Apparently the term is used by Dr. Salmond and by some other writers to express peculiar dislike to the doctrine thus designated. We have seen, on p. 205f, that this so-called dogma does not contradict the New Testament nearly so directly as does the theory of universal salvation. The Biblical testimony against universalism is not stated in its full force in this volume.

Having rejected these two theories, Dr. Salmond devotes the last chapter of his work to "The Alternative Doctrine." He says, "What remains but to recognise that the voice of Scripture and the judgment of reason are, each with its own measure of clearness, on the side of the last of the three possible Christian answers to the great question of the final issues of man's life?" But he does not state clearly the doctrine he accepts. Indeed, with the exception of two short sentences which assert the superiority of the theory of restorationism to that of conditionalism, almost every word in the chapter might be accepted by Mr. White. But Dr. Salmond's rejection of the other theories leads us to infer that he holds the endless suffering of the lost. This he does chiefly as an alternative to the theories he rejects. For in the chapter in question he gives scarcely any argument in support of his own belief. But, before we accept an important and tremendous

doctrine on this negative ground, we must have an absolutely decisive disproof of all alternatives: and we must have absolute proof that the doctrine we accept is the only possible other alternative. Dr. Salmond has not so much as referred to the strongest argument from the Bible in proof of the annihilation of the lost, viz. the passages which compare their doom to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire; although he has done something to overturn some other arguments in favour of it. But, to overturn arguments in favour of a doctrine, does not necessarily disprove the doctrine itself. And our author has done little or nothing to prove that the doctrine of annihilation is contradicted in the Bible. This defect of proof leaves open another alternative which our author has not discussed, viz. that the ultimate fate of the lost is not precisely defined in the Bible. The very serious objections, stated in Lect. XVII., to the doctrine of the endless suffering of the lost, Dr. Salmond passes over in complete silence.

This failure to grapple with the great issues involved in the questions in hand is, in my view, a serious defect in this able and useful work.

NOTE K, on p. 215.—The theory of universal restoration is advocated in a thoughtful volume by Andrew Jukes on *The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things*, which appeared in A.D. 1867, and has since been frequently reprinted.

The writer quotes the passages, noted by me on pp. 124, 162, 177, which seem to assert the final ruin of the lost; and adds, on p. 21, "Words could not well be stronger. The difficulty is that all this is but one side of Scripture, which in other places seems to teach a very different doctrine." He then quotes other passages which assert the universality of God's purpose of salvation; and goes on to say, on p. 25, "Now is not this apparent contradiction,—few finding the way of life, and yet in Christ all made alive,—God's elect a little flock, and yet all the kindreds of the earth blessed in Abraham's seed,—mercy upon all, and yet eternal punishment,—the restitution of all things, and yet eternal destruction,—the wrath of God for ever, and yet all things reconciled to Him,—eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and yet the destruction through death, not of the works of the devil only, but of him who has the power of death, i.e. the devil,—the second death and the lake which burneth with fire, and yet no more death or curse, but all things subdued by Christ, and God all in all. What can this contradiction mean? Is there any key, and if so, what is it, to this mystery?"

This key, Mr. Jukes thinks he has found. On p. 27 he says, "The truth which solves the riddle is to be found in those same Scriptures which seem to raise the difficulty, and lies in the mystery of the will of our ever blessed God as to the process and stages of redemption:—

"(1) First, His will by some to bless and save others;

by a first-born seed, 'the first-born from the dead,' to save and bless the later-born :—

"(2) His will therefore to work out the redemption of the lost by successive ages or dispensations, or, to use the language of St. Paul, 'according to the purpose of the ages:'—and

"(3) Lastly, His will (thus meeting the nature of our fall,) to make death, judgment, and destruction, the means and way to life, acquittal and salvation; in other words, 'through death to destroy him that has the power of death, that is the devil, and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime, subject to bondage.'"

Under the above three heads, Mr. Jukes gives "The teaching of Scripture, as to the destiny of the human race." The first assertion, we need not deny. But, in the total absence of express Bible teaching, it affords no presumption whatever that God will actually save, through the agency of those who believe in Christ, all who now reject the salvation offered by Him. The second assertion is a very narrow foundation for hope that in subsequent successive ages God will work out the salvation of those condemned on the last day. And, thirdly, that God saves men through the death of Christ, is small ground for expectation that the second death of those cast into the lake of fire will be to them a "means and way to life."

Under the second assertion, Mr. Jukes transliterates the word commonly rendered *eternal* (see p. 64) into *æonial*; and correctly emphasises its relation to the

word *age* or *ages*. But this last word is indisputably temporal, denoting a period of time with a unity of its own, and is appropriately used of any such period. But our author puts into it another significance, and on p. 65 interprets "eternal life" to be "a life, the distinctive peculiarity of which is, that it has to do with a Saviour, and so is part of a remedial plan." That this last idea is no part of the meaning of the word *eternal* is evident from its use, quoted on p. 119 of this volume, to describe ancient ruins.

After thus discussing "the teaching of Scripture," or rather after weaving the scheme of salvation embodied in the above three propositions, Mr. Jukes considers "popular objections." Of these, the most serious is that his doctrine "is opposed to Scripture." He sets aside, however, at once all passages which speak of the destruction of those who reject Christ, on the ground, stated under proposition 3, that this destruction is the way to salvation. The writer then discusses Matt. xii. 32, John iii. 36, Mark ix. 42-50, Matt. xxv. 46, xxvi. 24, Luke xvi. 26. But he omits all reference to the passages which compare the doom of the lost to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire.

The strongest points in the book are its merited rebukes of the over-statements of popular theology. But the writer seems to me to have done nothing whatever to prove his main point, viz. that the writers of the Bible teach that all men will ultimately be admitted into the blessedness of the children of God.

NOTE L, on p. 215.—Dr. Samuel Cox, for ten years editor of *The Expositor* and well known as author of an excellent commentary on Job and other works, published in A.D. 1877 a volume entitled *Salvator Mundi*: and this was followed in A.D. 1883 by a booklet entitled *The Larger Hope*. On p. 23 of the former work, he protests against certain popular opinions which he thus states: "These dogmas, which happily are losing force daily, and daily moving through a lessening circle, are,—that there is no probation beyond the grave; that when men leave this world their fate is fixed beyond all hope of change; that if, when they die, they have not repented of their sins, so far from finding any place of repentance open to them in the life to come, they will be condemned to an eternal torment, or, at least, to a destructive torment which will annihilate them."

The positive teaching which Dr. Cox would put in place of the above is fairly represented by another extract from p. 189: "Meanwhile, the purpose of God standeth sure. It is His will, His good pleasure, that all men should be saved by being led, through whatever correction and training may be necessary for that end, to a full and hearty recognition of the truth; which truth will be testified to them in its appropriate seasons, and by appropriate methods, in the ages to come, if it has not been brought home to them here: so apparently and so forcefully testified that at last they will no longer be able to withstand it, but will heartily betake themselves to the Father against whom

they have sinned, and submit themselves to His righteous will through the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus." Still more plainly on p. 11 of *The Larger Hope*: "While our brethren hold the redemption of Christ to extend only to the life that now is, and to take effect only on some men, we maintain, on the contrary, that it extends to the life to come, and must take effect on all men at the last." In other words, the writer expects the ultimate salvation of all men.

In support of this expectation Dr. Cox appeals to the Bible, with the limitation (see *Salvator Mundi* p. 24) that "he who has drawn a conclusion from Scripture which reason and conscience imperatively condemn, should need no other proof that he has misinterpreted the Word of God." In his appeal to the Bible, Dr. Cox excludes as not decisive the Old Testament, because written in the twilight of an earlier covenant; and the Book of Revelation and the parabolic language of the Gospels, on account of the difficulty involved in the interpretation of figurative modes of speech. But he points out, not unfairly, that these excluded parts of Holy Scripture contain passages, e.g. Luke xiii. 21, xv. 4, which seem to support his main contention. The great need for caution in the interpretation of figurative language, I have already admitted. And it will be noticed that in the foregoing expositions I have relied upon it only so far as it confirms the plain language of other parts of the New Testament. To the unique authority of the inborn moral sense of man, I have, especially on pp. 207-210,

paid profound respect. But our interpretation of its judgments in special cases is very apt to be warped by personal consideration. Its judgments may sometimes justly demand a reconsideration of historical and documentary evidence. But, taken alone, they are an uncertain foundation for positive teaching.

In proof that all men will at last be saved, Dr. Cox appeals to the many passages, discussed in Lect. XI., which assert that God's purpose of salvation embraces all men. This argument assumes that all God's purposes will eventually be accomplished in all men. And this assumption I cannot accept. Certainly I cannot make it a basis of further argument. For all around us to-day God's will is effectively resisted by His creatures. And the creation of creatures capable of resisting even for a moment the will of their Creator is a mystery so profound that we dare not affix limits to the extent to which He will permit that resistance to go. It is quite conceivable that God, after committing to man the awful prerogative of choosing his own path, may make the final destiny of each dependent on his own choice. The argument before us assumes that this final decision has been withheld. Of this, we have no proof.

Dr. Cox supports his general contention by asserting (on p. 205 of *Salvator Mundi*) that "the punishment of the unrighteous is at once retributive and remedial;" suggesting that all punishment of sin is designed to save the sinner. And the tenor of his book implies clearly that in all cases the design will be accomplished. That this is the design of the punishment to be inflicted

in the great day, he endeavours to prove by appealing to the significance of the Greek word κόλασις in Matt. xxv. 46, "they shall go away into eternal *punishment*." That this appeal is unsafe, I have on p. 173 attempted to prove. In human punishment, reformation of the person punished is not the only aim. And we have no right to say that it is the only aim of the punishment threatened by God to those who reject the salvation offered by Christ.

We now ask, How does Dr. Cox deal with the passages which seem to assert or imply the ultimate ruin of the unrepentant? The most decisive of these passages, he passes over in total silence. Of those which assert that destruction or something equivalent is the *end* of sinners, he makes no mention. We have no exposition of Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is destruction;" of 2 Cor. xi. 15, "whose end shall be according to their works;" of Heb. vi. 8, "whose end is to be burnt;" of 1 Peter iv. 17, "what will be the end of those who disobey the Gospel?" Nor have we any reference to the solemn words of Christ recorded in Matt. xxvi. 24, Mark xiv. 21, "good were it if that man had not been born." Dr. Cox calls attention, on p. 133 of *Salvator Mundi*, to the purifying effect of fire. But he has not noticed that those cast into the fire on the day of judgment are never described as metals which are refined by fire, but frequently, see pp. 162f, as vegetable matter, which is never purified, but always utterly and finally destroyed, by fire.

On the other hand, Dr. Cox discusses at length the

words *damnation*, *hell*, *eternal*, and shows that they have not the meanings sometimes attached to them. The word *damnation*, as shedding no light on the matter before us, I have not found needful to discuss. For the word *hell*, the Revised Version substituted *Hades* and *Gehenna*. The latter of these words, I have discussed on p. 166 of this volume.

For the word *αἰώνιος*, rendered *eternal*, Dr. Cox accepts Mr. Jukes' transliteration *æonial*; and gives to it practically the same meaning as he does. Strange to say, Dr. Cox gives to the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, which are always renderings of the same Greek word, two different meanings. He says, on p. 98 of *Salvator Mundi*, "We must not take the words 'eternal' and 'everlasting' as synonymous or equivalents. The one indicates that which continues through the whole of duration; the other, that which is out of duration and above it, of which the measures and sequences of time are no necessary part. The one expresses *quantity*, the other *quality*. 'Everlasting' denotes that which lasts for ever; 'eternal,' that which is spiritual and divine." Of this last assertion, our author gives no proof. And it is disproved by the occasional use of the word thus rendered, especially in the LXX., to describe objects, e.g. leviathan in Job xli. 4, which are neither spiritual nor divine.

The volume entitled *Salvator Mundi* opens with a quotation of our Lord's words recorded in Matt. xi. 20-24: "If the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had long ago repented

in sackcloth and ashes." Dr. Cox points out, fairly, that this implies that influences tending to repentance had been brought to bear on Capernaum which had not been brought to bear on those earlier cities; and argues that the men of Tyre cannot be lost simply because God withheld from them advantages given to Capernaum. In this I heartily agree. But the writer goes on to infer, on p. 17, that there must be for the cities of the Plain a probation beyond the grave. This inference, I cannot admit. We have no right to say that, if there be no probation after death, all the inhabitants of Tyre or even of Capernaum will be condemned in the great day. For, as is plainly taught by Paul in Rom. ii. 12-16, the law written on the hearts of all men is a standard by which all men will be judged: and we can well believe that judgment will be measured according to the moral advantages or disadvantages of each. And, if so, inequality of advantage affords no presumption of a future probation. The argument of Dr. Cox is valid only against those who teach that none will be received into the city of God except those who on earth have definitely and consciously accepted the salvation offered by Christ.

In his *Larger Hope*, Dr. Cox brings as an argument for the ultimate salvation of all men the fact that the ancient prophecies seemed to announce temporal dominion for Israel; and from this infers, not unfairly, that the truth sometimes lies not on but under the surface of Holy Scripture. He thus endeavours to weaken the force of the passages which assert, or seem

to imply, the ultimate destruction of the wicked. This reminder warns us that the meaning which lies on the surface is not always the correct one. But it does nothing to prove that a meaning which lies on the surface is necessarily or probably false, or that a meaning which does not lie on the surface is probably true. This "new argument" is merely an appropriate warning against hasty and confident generalisations from the words of Holy Scripture.

This warning is followed by an interesting "New Testament illustration." In 1 Cor. v. 3-5, Paul pronounces on an immoral Church-member an extreme and apparently final sentence. The guilty one was to be "handed over to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." But, as we learn from 2 Cor. ii. 5-8, he was afterwards forgiven and restored. From this, Dr. Cox infers that there may be ultimate pardon for some against whom has been passed what seems to be a final sentence.

This example proves that underneath the judgments of God may be an unexpected reserve of mercy. And this proof I gladly welcome. But, like the foregoing argument, it is only a warning against confident assertion touching the doom of the unsaved. It does very little to support Dr. Cox's main assertion. We notice also that in Paul's condemnation there is express mention of ultimate mercy for the condemned. But for those condemned in the great day we find, throughout the New Testament, no ray of hope.

The two volumes just noticed add little to our knowledge of the mysterious topic which they discuss. They protest against certain popular misinterpretations and exaggerations. But against these they set up a doctrine contradicted by the clear and abundant teaching of the New Testament.

NOTE M, on p. 215.—From the eloquent pen of Dean Farrar we have two volumes on the subject before us entitled *Eternal Hope* and *Mercy and Judgment*, published in the years 1878 and 1881 respectively.

In the preface (pp. xv.-xxi.) to the former work Dr. Farrar refuses, somewhat reluctantly, to assert that all men will be saved, and rejects also "the theory of Conditional Immortality" and "the Roman doctrine of *Purgatory*." And he protests against "the common, the popular view in our own Church." This popular view he states on p. 17 of his second work, specifying four points:

"1. That the fire of 'Hell' is material, and that its agonies are physical agonies.

"2. That the doom of 'everlasting damnation' is incurred by the vast majority of mankind.

"3. That this doom is passed irreversibly at death on all who die in a state of sin.

"4. That the duration of these material torments is necessarily endless for all who incur them."

Against the first two of these four statements, I join in Dr. Farrar's protest. We have already seen that in

the most conspicuous passages in the New Testament the word *fire* is certainly metaphorical. The only passage which, so far as I remember, speaks of the relative proportion of saved and lost is Matt. vii. 13, 14: "many are they who go in thereat . . . few that find it." And this speaks only of those who in Christ's day were already in the way of life as compared with the mass of mankind who were treading the path of sin, not of those who will ultimately be saved. Throughout the Bible we find no safe foundation for a general statement about the proportionate final doom of men.

The third assertion to which Dr. Farrar objects, I am not prepared to defend. For he explains "a state of sin" to be "a state in which there have been no visible fruits of repentance." That all such will be lost, I am by no means ready to assert. Dr. Farrar refers appropriately to boys and others, not manifestly pious, cut off suddenly by death. To discuss the fate of such persons, is altogether beyond our power. The Gospel was given, not to enable us to pronounce sentence on our neighbours, but to show us the path of life. On the other hand, it is very unsafe to make their case, about which we know so little, a basis of argument. It is quite conceivable that to them the Righteous Judge may give a just award apart from any probation beyond the grave.

The fourth opinion again mentions "material torments," which I have already disavowed as going beyond the teaching of the Bible. The phrase "tor-

ments necessarily endless" also goes beyond anything found in Holy Scripture.

In other words, Dr. Farrar protests and argues against teaching which in this volume I have repudiated.

The positive teaching of the volumes before us is thus stated on p. 178 of *Mercy and Judgment*:

"1. I cannot but fear, from one or two passages of Scripture, and from the general teaching of the Church, and from certain facts of human experience, that some souls may be ultimately lost;—that they will not be admitted into the Vision and the Sabbath of God.

"2. I trust that by God's mercy, and through Christ's redemption, the majority of mankind will be ultimately saved.

"3. Yet, since they die unfit for heaven—since they die in a state of imperfect grace—I believe that in some way or other, before the final judgment, God's mercy may reach them, and the benefits of Christ's atonement be extended to them beyond the grave."

In reference to these assertions, I remark that not "one or two passages," but, as I have shown, the teaching of several writers of the New Testament and of Christ as His words are there recorded asserts or clearly implies that some will be "ultimately lost." Of the relative proportion of saved and lost, we know nothing: and speculation is useless. Nor do we know anything about what takes place in the mysterious interval between death and judgment. But I must again protest against the assertion or suggestion, reiterated by Dr. Farrar and others, that the only hope for those

who die "unfit for heaven," or "in a state of imperfect grace," is in a probation beyond death. It seems to me that, to every one of ordinary intelligence who comes to years of maturity, life presents a fair test of character, and therefore an adequate probation. And this is implied in important teaching of Paul. But the result of this probation is often not visible on earth.

A real service rendered by Dr. Farrar's books is that they compel us to contemplate the significance of teaching prevalent in the Church during long ages and even to our own day. With righteous indignation he quotes the terrible words of honoured teachers, words which have no sufficient justification in Holy Scripture and which carry with them their own condemnation. By quoting these words, he has done not a little to prevent their repetition. He has also, in his later volume, gathered together a mass of useful information about the opinions held by various writers ancient and modern on the future punishment of sin.

NOTE N, on p. 219.—In A.D. 1846 appeared a volume by the Rev. Edward White entitled *Life in Christ. Four Discourses upon the Scripture Doctrine that Immortality is the Peculiar Privilege of the Regenerate.* The writer opposed the popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and endeavoured to prove that the Bible teaches expressly that the end of the wicked will be final cessation of consciousness, preceded by actual suffering in proportion to the guilt of each. After a

long interval, this was followed in A.D. 1869 by a scholarly and thoughtful pamphlet entitled *The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, by the Rev. H. Constable, M.A., advocating the same theory. It has been several times reprinted. In A.D. 1875 Mr. White published a new work entitled *Life in Christ: a Study of the Scripture Doctrine on the Nature of Man, the Object of the Divine Incarnation, and the Conditions of Human Immortality*. Of this work a third and enlarged edition appeared in A.D. 1878.

These writers and many others who follow them repudiate the final restoration of all men: and they differ from all the writers mentioned above in that they reject the popular theory of the immortality of the soul, or, more correctly expressed, the essential and endless permanence of human consciousness. Their own theory is commonly known as "Conditional Immortality." It asserts that the ultimate permanence of human consciousness depends upon the man himself.

In support of his main contention, Mr. White appeals to the word *destruction* frequently used in the New Testament to describe the doom of the lost; to the teaching of Christ, so abundantly recorded in the Fourth Gospel, that God gave His Son to die in order that all who believe in Him may not perish or be destroyed, but may have eternal life; and to other similar teaching elsewhere in the New Testament. From this he rightly infers that they who reject the salvation announced by Christ and received by those who believe will be excluded from eternal life and

be *destroyed*. This last word, he interprets to mean extinction of consciousness. Upon this meaning turns a great part of his argument. He also assumes, or endeavours to prove, that loss of life eternal involves ultimate loss of consciousness.

The only proof, so far as I can see, adduced by Mr. White for the meaning he wishes to give to the Greek word rendered *destroy* when used in the New Testament to describe the doom of the lost is its use in several passages quoted by him from the *Phædo* of Plato, and denoting undoubtedly the extinction of the soul. He then argues that the same word cannot mean both extinction and endless misery.

The word never means either the one or the other, but, as I endeavoured to show on pp. 105-115, utter and hopeless ruin. At the same time, both extinction and endless misery are forms of ruin, and may be so described. But, if so, the peculiar form of ruin must be otherwise specified. This Plato does in the passages quoted in the volume before us. He shows clearly in the first quotation what sort of ruin he has in mind. See quotation given in *Life in Christ* p. 362: "They fear that, when the soul leaves the body, her place may be nowhere, but that on the very day of death *she may be destroyed and perish*." To guard against misunderstanding, Plato says in a second quotation: "Herself (the soul) *be destroyed and come to an end*." So in the third: "Are we to suppose that the soul . . . if this be her nature and origin, is *blown away and perishes* immediately on quitting the body, as the many say?"

This apparent repetition proves that to Plato the word rendered *destroy* or *perish* was not in itself sufficient to convey the idea of extinction, but needed to be supplemented by other less ambiguous terms. And in the passages from various Greek authors of various ages quoted in Lect. X. of this volume, the context makes equally clear that the destruction referred to was not extinction but only ruin. This common use of the word, also its frequent use even in the New Testament as a synonym for natural death, by writers who did not look upon death as extinction, and its frequent use to describe an object lost but not injured, Mr. White has not discussed.

The only other argument in support of Mr. White's main position, or rather another form of the same argument, is the frequent teaching, in the Fourth Gospel and elsewhere in the New Testament, that eternal life is contingent on faith and well-doing. This argument implies that the absence of life involves absence of existence or at least of permanent existence. But of this, Mr. White gives no proof. It is useless to say that existence is an essential element of the idea of life. For the absence of the whole by no means implies absence of each of its essential elements. The absence of one of them negatives the presence of the whole. If, as I have endeavoured to show, life beyond the grave includes both consciousness and blessedness, the loss of blessedness is loss of life, even though the unblessed one continues consciously to exist.

Thus fails, in my view, Mr. White's main argument. Throughout his interesting and able volume I find no proof of the ultimate extinction of the wicked except that contained in "the plain meaning" of two Greek words. And to me, this meaning is disproved by the use of these words in classical Greek and in the Greek Bible.

Our author is more successful in his disproof of the popular doctrine of "the immortality of the soul." And by disproving it, and thus calling attention to a popular error, he has done good service. The strongest point of the volume is its protest against the exaggeration and distortion of the teaching of the Bible not unfrequently found in popular theology, and especially in some popular sermons. On behalf of such distortion and exaggeration, I have nothing to say. But I think that the exaggerations are somewhat exaggerated by Mr. White. Certainly, the present generation has witnessed a great improvement in this matter. To this, we may hope that his volume has contributed. But, while protesting justly against popular misrepresentation, he has, in my opinion, read into the words of the New Testament a sense quite alien from the thoughts of its writers.

The foregoing is a very imperfect account of Mr. White's interesting volume. He endeavours to prove that man was not at his creation endowed with endless consciousness, but that this was made contingent on his obedience; and that, after man had sinned, Christ died in order to give back to him the endless permanence

thus lost. With this theory I have dealt only so far as it bears on the future punishment of sin.

The tremendous moral objections to the theory of endless torment and the moral bearing of his own theory are given with great eloquence and force by Mr. Constable.

NOTE O, on p. 219.—Another protest against popular theories is a volume by the late Prebendary Row entitled *Future Retribution.* These theories, every one of which I heartily disown, he parades at wearisome length at the beginning of his work; and illustrates them by unfortunate quotations from a popular modern preacher and from a devout Roman Catholic priest. So attractive to Dr. Row are these theories, that they reappear in almost the same dress, and occupy a later chapter of the same volume; and throughout the work they are ever in view. Now it is quite right to overturn error. But this can be done effectively only by first building up positive truth. Much better would it have been if our author had begun his work by expounding the teaching of Holy Scripture, and had then gone on, from this secure platform, to overturn prevalent error.

In the main Prebendary Row accepts Mr. White's theory of the ultimate annihilation of the wicked, and maintains it by the arguments already discussed. To these he adds nothing. He argues on p. xxiii "that it is impossible that such words as ὄλεθρος, and others of a kindred meaning, which are fairly represented in

English by the word 'destruction,' and others of similar signification, could have been understood by the members of those Churches as meaning an endless existence in never-ending punishment; and that if it had been the writers' intention to express such an idea, they could hardly have chosen a more unsuitable word in the Greek language to denote it." With all this I agree; and indeed can go further in the same direction. To the early Christians the words rendered "destruction" could not mean either "endless existence in never-ending punishment" or annihilation, but only utter and hopeless ruin.

In a chapter entitled "Does Human Probation terminate at Death?" Dr. Row endeavours to show, by arguments similar to those of Drs. Cox and Farrar, that we have reason to expect that for those who have had few religious advantages on earth there will be a probation beyond the grave. And he presses strongly the argument that, without any special fault of their own, many die in a state utterly unfit for immediate access to God, and therefore need a further purifying process. But, as we have already seen, this by no means involves a fresh probation. For another probation would make a man's ultimate destiny contingent on his action after death, whereas it is quite conceivable that there may be beyond the grave a spiritual development in which each will make progress only in the direction chosen on earth. Certainly, the manifest need of development is a very uncertain ground of hope that they who on earth have chosen the bad and refused

the good will have another opportunity of reversing or persisting in their bad choice. Moreover, the conditions of the unseen world are to us so utterly unknown that speculation is useless. Sufficient for us is the Gospel promise of eternal life for all who accept it.

Dr. Row rejects in strong terms the teaching advocated by Dr. Cox. He writes, on p. 387, "I therefore cannot think the mode of interpretation of these terms which is adopted by the Universalist to be less non-natural than that which assigns to them the above meaning. Surely it is a mode of dealing with language which no one would adopt, unless compelled by the exigences of a theory."

His own opinion is expressed in the following paragraph: "It is a blessed truth, affirmed by the Christian revelation, that there is a time coming in the future when God will have reconciled all things unto Himself; and when evil will cease to exist in the universe which He has created. There are only two ways in which this can be effected—either by the conversion of evil beings, or by causing them to cease to exist. The Universalist affirms that it is in accordance with the divine character that the mode in which this will be effected will be by their ultimate conversion. This the language of the New Testament, taken in its obvious meaning, denies. It remains, therefore, that the second alternative is the only possible one; that evil beings will be annihilated, either by the exertion of God's almighty power, or because He has so constituted the moral universe that, under His providential government,

the disease of evil will ultimately destroy man's spiritual and moral being, just as incurable physical disease destroys his bodily life."

This argument I commend to those who teach that all men will eventually be saved. It does not seem to me to have received from them the attention it deserves. Certainly, it is another way of explaining some of the passages on which they rely. But I have already, in Lect. XI., endeavoured to show that it rests on a very insecure basis; viz. the assumption that God's universal purpose of salvation will be accomplished in each individual embraced by that purpose. Of this we have no proof.

NOTE P, on p. 219.—A more recent work in support of the theory of the ultimate extinction of the lost is an interesting and able book entitled *The Problem of Immortality* by Dr. E. Petavel of Lausanne, published in French in two volumes which appeared in December 1890 and December 1891 respectively, and as one volume, in an English translation, in A.D. 1892. Occupying the same standpoint as Mr. White, the writer naturally goes over the same ground. But this later work has independent value as a thoughtful restatement of the case.

Dr. Petavel mixes together and identifies two distinct issues, viz. the essential immortality of the soul and the ultimate extinction of the lost; and accepts as proof of the latter every disproof of the former. He asserts correctly that the Bible never teaches the essential

permanence of the human soul, and that in the New Testament life beyond the grave is always reserved for the righteous. From this he incorrectly infers that the lost will ultimately sink into unconsciousness. He thus falls into the common fallacy of accepting lack of proof as proof to the contrary. In this volume I have endeavoured to show that the writers of the New Testament, while using language which asserts or implies that some will be finally shut out from the glory of heaven, do not define in unmistakable language what their fate will be. This alternative position, which is certainly worthy of consideration, Dr. Petavel ignores. Evidently he supposes that, by disproving popular error, he has restored the true teaching of Holy Scripture.

This lack of well-grounded positive teaching is a serious defect. Instead of investigating the meaning of the word *destruction*, Dr. Petavel assumes that it denotes something equivalent to annihilation, and claims in support of his doctrine all sorts of passages in which the word occurs, even where there is no indication that it means extinction. He thus claims for an ancient Greek word associations of thought derived from the modern theological use of its French and English equivalents. This is, as I have shown, an abundant source of error in theology. Only by careful research can we reproduce the sense which ancient writers intended their words to convey. This philological research is lacking in the volume before us.

As some compensation for this serious defect, we

find, towards the close of the volume, a "Philological Study of the Meaning of the Greek Verb *ἀπόλλυμι*," by a very able Greek scholar, Dr. Weymouth, author of *The Resultant Greek Testament*. He admits, on p. 492, as asserted by me on pp. 106f of this volume, that in Homer the dead are said to be *destroyed*; although "in many instances" this word "is used where the existence of the departed is expressly recognised." His only explanation is that "the Greek mind did not reckon the existence of the disembodied spirit as existence at all." But Homer represents the dead as still speaking and bewailing their lot and as recognising friends; and gives no hint that they will ever sink into unconsciousness. This proves that extinction of consciousness is no part of the meaning of the word with which he frequently describes their lot. Between a worthless existence such as Homer describes and non-existence is an infinite difference. And if the dead, who are supposed to be still conscious of their misery, are said to have been *destroyed*, without any suggestion of their ultimate extinction, we have no right to say that the destruction of those who reject the Gospel involves their extinction.

On p. 490 Dr. Weymouth meets an objection based on passages at the beginning of *The Clouds* of Aristophanes in which a man says that he is sinking unto ruin (literally "I am being destroyed," or, "am perishing") and then that he is already ruined (literally "this calamity has destroyed me") by the wastefulness of his son; and does so by saying that the father was dying of terror for fear of the money lender. But this

is not suggested in the context. The fear of the money lender is merely a presage of coming ruin. Of the father's approaching death, there is no hint. In this sense of ruin, the word is very common with Aristophanes, occurring in *The Clouds* not less than twenty times, in most cases without any suggestion even of bodily death. In lines 856f it denotes the *loss* of a cloak, reminding us of the *lost* coin in Luke xv. 8. The cloak and coin were *lost* even though some one else had found, and were using, them. To this common use of the word, in which it cannot denote extinction, Dr. Weymouth scarcely refers.

Another passage quoted by him is l. 683 of the *Hecuba* of Euripides, where she says, bewailing the death of her last surviving son, "I am *lost*, a wretched one, no longer do I exist." Yet indisputably she was existing and conscious. This case proves that under strong emotion the Greeks sometimes used language about existing persons which denotes literally non-existence. Similarly, we sometimes speak, without any thought of extinction, of a man "putting an end to his existence." But frequently, without any emotion, as a matter of ordinary discourse, the Greek word rendered *destroy* is used to describe death, even by writers who, like Homer, believed that the dead are still conscious. This proves that to them the word did not convey the idea of extinction, actual or ultimate.

On p. 494 of Dr. Petavel's volume Dr. Weymouth finds "an amusing slip" in my logic when I expound (in *The Expositor* for January 1890, reprinted on p. 112

of these lectures) the assertion that Ulysses *lost* his companions and ship by saying that "to him they were virtually non-existent." But I readily admit that annihilation is a kind of destruction and may always be so described. What I say, and what Dr. Petavel, supported by Dr. Weymouth, denies, is that it is not the only form of destuction; that the word *destroy* does not always mean to reduce to non-existence. Moreover "virtually non-existent" is very different from actual non-existence. The words of Homer do not necessarily assert that Ulysses' ship was actually non-existent. If it had been cast on a desert shore and rescued and repaired by natives, it would still have been, from Ulysses' point of view, *lost*, i.e. to him virtually non-existent: for he would still be without ship and companions. This common use of the word, to denote anything lost, Dr. Weymouth has not discussed.

Dr. Petavel claims (as does Mr. White) at some length (on pp. 229-245) that the earliest Christian writers held the doctrine which he advocates. But, in the passages he quotes, the early writers merely reproduce the language of the New Testament without expounding its meaning. They do not, so far as I have been able to verify his quotations, use language which asserts clearly, as does the language of Plato quoted on p. 109 of this volume, that the lost will fall into unconsciousness. But Dr. Petavel seems to me correct in saying that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, involving endless torment of the lost, gained its prevalence in the

Church through the great influence of Augustine. See on pp. 199, 211.

By calling attention to an erroneous doctrine, the advocates of what they incorrectly call "conditional immortality" have rendered no small service. But, not satisfied with proving that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not taught in the Bible, they have gone on to assert, as taught in the Bible, another doctrine, viz. the ultimate extinction of the lost, almost equally destitute of Biblical support.

NOTE Q, on p. 223.—Nearer to the position taken up in these lectures is a small volume on *Future Punishment* by Dr. Clemance. The author enumerates and then discusses four theories; viz. (1) Universal Restoration, (2) Annihilation, (3) Absolute Endlessness of Suffering and Sin, (4) his own opinion, viz. that "in Scripture the duration of Future Punishment is left indefinite." See p. 62. By this last assertion, I understand Dr. Clemance to mean that the Bible is quite definite about the finality of future punishment, but leaves open a possibility that the lost may sink into unconsciousness. Of these theories he says on p. 19, "We do not accept *the first*, for it seems to us *against* Scripture; nor *the second*, for it *distorts* Scripture; nor *the third*, for it *goes beyond* Scripture." Of these judgments, the first and second are supported by arguments most able and, as I think, most conclusive. Dr. Clemance's defence of the third judgment is little more than an exposition

of the meaning of the word rendered *eternal*, an attempt to show that it conveys the idea, not of absolute, but only of relative, endlessness; i.e. of a beginning or end beyond the writer's view. With this judgment, the teaching of this volume is in substantial agreement.

On p. 53, Dr. Clemance strongly condemns "a tremendous assertion of Moses Stuart's, which ought never to have been made; viz. 'If the Scriptures have not asserted the endless punishment of the wicked, neither have they asserted the endless happiness of the righteous, nor the endless glory and existence of the Godhead.'" This assertion implies that we have no proof of the endless existence of God except the few passages which speak of the agelasting punishment of sinners. But see on p. 236. Foolish statements like this, made without thought in order to prove a point, have done incalculable harm by bringing Theology into contempt. Dr. Clemance's warning to keep well within the teaching of Holy Scripture is certainly salutary.

Our author has, it seems to me, himself gone beyond these limits when, on p. 16, he asserted that "no human spirit reaches the crucial point of its probation till it has come into contact with the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ for acceptance or rejection." This statement implies a probation beyond the grave for those who in this life have not heard the Gospel. But no proof of the above statement is given. It rests entirely on the assumption that apart from the Gospel there can be no satisfactory test of human character. But I have

already shown, on p. 221, that the ordinary circumstances of life, taken in connection with the law written on the hearts of all men, afford to all who come to years of maturity a most searching and impartial test of character. We have therefore no need to seek a probation beyond the grave. It is right to say that Dr. Clemance mentions a future probation only by way of suggestion. As not taught in the Bible, he refuses to assert it. See p. 76. But it is involved in the fundamental principle quoted above. In proof that probation is not necessarily endless, and that it does not necessarily always lead to amendment, Dr. Clemance appropriately quotes Luke xiii. 9, "If it bear fruit, well; if not, cut it down."

NOTE R.—As dealing with all the subjects treated in this volume I may refer to a scholarly and instructive work translated from the Norwegian and entitled *Life after Death and the Future of the Kingdom of God*, by Lars Nielsen Dahle, who was for many years Bishop of the Norwegian Missionary Church in Madagascar. The reader will find a full and interesting account of the Intermediate State and questions arising out of it, topics dealt with only slightly in this volume. The writer then discusses the great events preparing for the End, and the great events at the time of the End. Lastly he deals somewhat scantily with the End, including the Lord's appearing, the resurrection, the judgment, perdition, the transformation of nature, eternal life. To the subject of the future punishment of sin,

the writer devotes less than ten pages, leaving untouched the most serious aspects of the subject.

The real value of the book is that it treats the subject of eschatology as a whole, and pays special attention to elements of it which have not received elsewhere the attention they deserve. As a supplement to other works on the subject, I am glad to recommend it.

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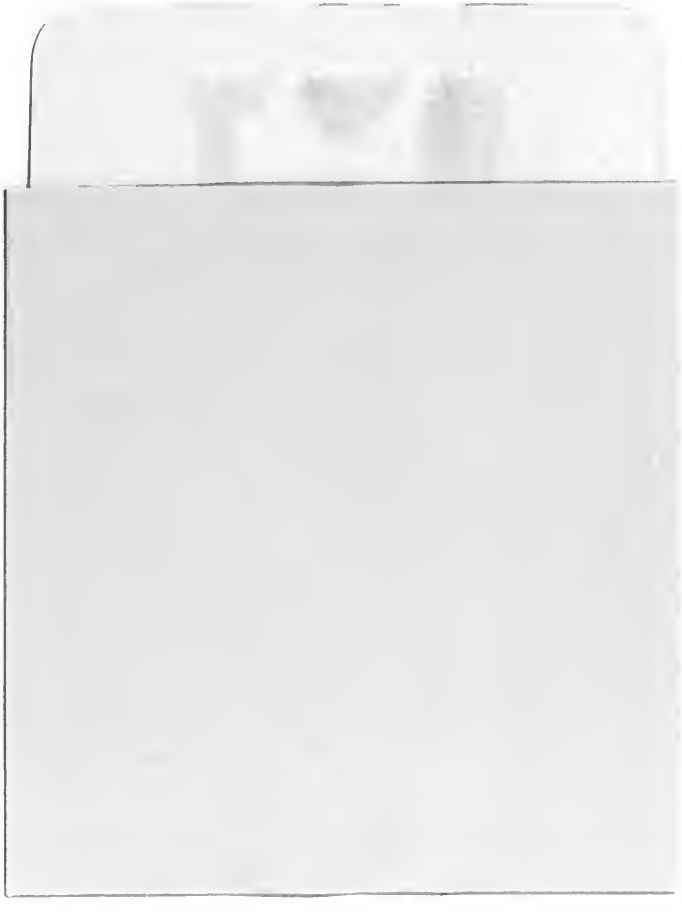
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